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THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

L. B. SEELEY AND SONS,
WESTON GREEN, THAMES DITTON

THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW;

WITH CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES, AND PRACTICAL REMARKS:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION

ON THE NATURE AND USE OF PROPHECY.

BY THE REV. ALFRED JENOUR,

CURATE OF SEATON AND HARRINGWORTH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

"We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts."—2 Peter i. 19.

VOL. II.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

SECT. 33. CHAP. XXXVI. XXXVII.

THESE two chapters contain the history of Sennacherib's invasion of Judea, and of the manner in which Jerusalem was delivered from his power by the miraculous interposition of God. They are the same in substance as the xviiith and xixth of 2 Kings. Bishop Lowth justly observes, 'They are very properly inserted here, as affording the best light to many of the preceding prophecies; and as almost necessary to introduce the prophecy in the xxxviith chapter, this being the answer of God to Hezekiah's prayer.' Indeed, whoever would understand Isaiah must be perfectly familiar with the contents of these chapters.

whose high places and altars Hezekiah hath taken away, saying to Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before
8. this altar? And now then make a covenant with my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou art able on
9. thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my Lord's servants? And why trustest thou
10. in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? And now have I come up without Jehovah against this land to destroy it? Jehovah said unto me,
11. Go up against this land and destroy it. And Eliakim, and Shebna, and Joah, said to Rabshakeh; Speak now to thy servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it; and speak not to us in the Jew's language, in the hearing of the people that are on the wall.
12. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my lord sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? Hath he not sent me for the sake of the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat and
13. drink their own excrements with you? Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the language of the Jews, and said; Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of
14. Assyria; Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to
15. deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Jehovah, saying; Jehovah will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into

16. the hand of the king of Assyria.—Hearken not
to Hezekiah; for thus saith the king of
Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a
present, and come out to me; and every man
shall eat of his own vine, and every man
of his own fig-tree, and every man shall
17. drink of the waters of his own cistern; Until
I come and take you to a land like your own
land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread
18. and vineyards. Listen not, I say, to Heze-
kiah, lest he deceive you, saying, Jehovah will
deliver us. Hath any one of the gods of the
nations delivered his land out of the hand
19. of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods
of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the
gods of Sepharvaim? and did they deliver
20. Samaria out of my hand? Who are they
among all the gods of these lands, that have
delivered their land out of my hand, that
Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my
21. hand? But they held their peace and answered
him not a word; for the king's commandment
22. was, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim
the son of Hilkiah, who was over the king's
household, and Shebna the secretary, and
Joah, the son of Asaph the recorder, to
Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and they
told him the words of Rabshakeh.

CHAP. XXXVII. 1.—And it came to pass when king
Hezekiah heard them, that he rent his gar-
ments, and clothed himself with sackcloth, and

2. went into the house of Jehovah. And he
sent Eliakim who was over the household, and
Shebna the secretary, and the elders of the
priests, clothed in sackcloth, to Isaiah the son
3. of Amoz, the prophet. And they said unto
him; Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day
of trouble, and reproof, and contempt; for
the children are come to the birth, and there
4. is no strength to bring forth. It may be
Jehovah thy God will hear the words of Rab-
shakeh whom his master the king of Assyria
hath sent to reproach the living God, and will
reprove the words which Jehovah thy God
hath heard: and do thou offer up a prayer for
5. the remnant that is left. And the servants
6. of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.—And Isaiah
said to them, Thus shall ye say unto your
master; Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid
of the words that thou hast heard, with
which the servants of the king of Assyria have
7. blasphemed me. Behold, I put (l) within
him a spirit of terror, and he shall hear a
rumour, and return to his own land, and I
will cause him to fall by the sword in his own
land.
8. And Rabshakeh returned, and found the king
of Assyria besieging Libnah, for he had heard
9. that he was departed from Lachish. And he
(Sennacherib) heard a report concerning
Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, that he was come
out to make war with him:—and when he

heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah,
10. saying, Thus shall ye say to Hezekiah, king of Judah, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, in that he hath said, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand
11. of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, to their utter destruction; and
12. shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations which my fathers destroyed delivered them? of Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which
13. were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivah?
14. And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it: and Hezekiah went up to the house of Jehovah and spread it
15. before Jehovah.—And Hezekiah prayed to Jehovah, saying,
16. Jehovah God of Hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and
17. earth.—Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear; open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see, and hear all the words of Sennacherib, who
18. hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, Jehovah, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands;

19. and have cast their gods into the fire, (for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone,) and have de-
20. stroyed them. And now, Jehovah our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou Jehovah alone (2) art God.
21. And Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel; That which thou hast prayed to me concerning Sennacherib, king of Assyria, I
22. have (3) heard; This is the word which Jehovah hath spoken concerning him:

The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee,

23. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?
And against whom hast thou raised thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high?
Against the Holy One of Israel.
24. By thy servants hast thou reproached Jehovah, and said,

By the multitude of my chariots have I ascended the height of the mountains,
The sides of Lebanon, and have cut down its tall cedars, and its choicest fir trees,
And have come to the high part of his border, to the forest of his Carmel.

25. I have digged and drunk water,

And have dried up with the soles of my feet, all
the rivers of the fortified places.
26. Hast thou not heard that I have done it long ago,
And how that in former times I have de-
signed it?—
Now have I brought it to pass, and thou art
appointed to lay waste
Fortified (4) cities into ruinous heaps.
27. Therefore were their inhabitants of small power,
and dismayed and confounded;
As the grass of the field were they, and as the
green herb,
As the dry grass on the house tops, as corn
blasted before it grow up.
28. But I know thy sitting down, and thy going
forth, and thy coming;
And I know also thy rage against me.
29. Because thy rage against me, and thy boasting
have come up into my ears;
And I will put my hook in thy nose, and my
bridle in thy lips,
And I will turn thee back by the way thou
camest.—
30. And this shall be a sign unto thee: *
Eat this year that which groweth of itself, and in
the second year its produce,
And in the third year, sow and reap,
And plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.

* Hezekiah.

31. And the escaped remnant that is left of the house of Judah,
Shall again take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards;
32. For from Jerusalem shall a remnant go forth, and the escaped from Mount Zion.
The zeal of Jehovah God of Hosts will do this.
33. Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria,
He shall not come into this city, nor shall he shoot an arrow there,
Nor shall he present a shield before it, nor cast up a mound against it:
34. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return,
And he shall not come into this city, saith Jehovah.
35. For I will defend this city to save it,
For mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.
36. And the angel of Jehovah went forth and smote in the host of the Assyrian, an hundred and eighty five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all
37. dead corpses. And Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed, and went away, and returned,
38. and dwelt in Nineveh. And as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch, his god, Adramelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia; and Esarhaddon his son, reigned in his stead.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVI. 1—3.

V. 1. This was the first invasion of Sennacherib; and it must have been on this occasion that Hezekiah submitted himself, and agreed to pay whatever sum Sennacherib might demand. 2 Kings xviii. 14.

V. 2. *And the king of Assyria sent*, &c. That is, I imagine, when he came into Judæa a second time, perhaps the year following, in consequence of Hezekiah's refusing to pay the tribute he demanded. The Jewish king might have supposed that the sum he gave Sennacherib was to release him altogether from any further demands, while Sennacherib insisted upon its being annual, which caused the war between them. Something of the kind must have taken place, but the history is so concise that we can only conjecture what were the particular circumstances that led to a second invasion. That Sennacherib, in some way or other, acted treacherously, and wished to oppress Hezekiah, and make him a mere dependent, is clear from chap. xxxiii. 8.

"*Lachish*" was a town about thirty miles S W of Jerusalem.

"*The conduit*," &c. The canal which supplied the upper reservoir of the city with water; the place where Isaiah had met Ahaz; chap. vii. 3.

V. 3. "*Eliakim,—Shebna,—Joah.*" These were evidently the three principal persons in Hezekiah's court. The first, in modern terms, was chancellor

of the exchequer; the second, secretary of state; the third, called the recorder, kept an account of the principal transactions of government.

V. 6. "*Thou trustest on Egypt.*" Hezekiah did not depend upon Egypt for deliverance, although many of his nobles and people did; but the Assyrian general speaks according to his own supposition.

V. 7. Sennacherib seems to have imagined, that the high places which Hezekiah had destroyed were dedicated to the worship of Jehovah; and endeavours artfully, by this language, to take away the confidence of the people, by insinuating, not only that their God was unable to save them, but also that Hezekiah had dishonoured him, and acted tyrannically towards themselves.

V. 8. "*I will give thee two thousand horses,*" &c. Rabshakeh makes this proposition ironically, and would intimate, that Hezekiah had not men enough to mount the small number of horses named, although they should be given him; how then could he hope to withstand the whole force of the Assyrian army?

V. 10. This clause is directed to the pious Jews who relied upon Jehovah, as the two former verses were to the sceptical: as if he had said, 'Some of you expect that Jehovah your God will interpose and save you; but know that I am come up against you by his command, and under his auspices.' We can hardly imagine a speech more artfully framed than this, or one better calculated to work upon the feelings of all descriptions of persons.

V. 11. The officers of Hezekiah were fearful that the people might be terrified by the threatenings of the Assyrian general, and induced to revolt; they therefore begged him to speak to them in the Assyrian language, that the people might not understand him; but this

would of course have defeated the chief object he had in view.

V. 16, 17. The proposition made by Rabshakeh to the Jewish people was, that they should lay down their arms and make peace with his master; in which case they would be permitted to dwell securely in their own country, until Sennacherib should have finished the war in Egypt, and then, on his return to Babylon, he would take them with him to a land equally good with their own.

V. 19. *Hamath, Arpad,* &c. The situation of these places is altogether uncertain; we may however infer, that they were cities which Sennacherib had taken on his way to Jerusalem.

CHAP. XXXVII.

V. 1. Hezekiah, when he heard the message of Sennacherib, acted in perfect conformity with his character and principles: he *rent his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth,* in token that he considered himself and his people as sinners justly deserving of the divine judgment; and *he went into the house of Jehovah,* because he looked to him alone for help and deliverance.

V. 3. "*For the children are come to the birth,*" &c. Meaning, that they were reduced to a state of the greatest perplexity. They knew not what to advise or what to do; like women in the situation alluded to. It was, probably, a proverbial expression in common use among the Jews.

V. 4. "*Thy God.*" Hezekiah does not say *our* God, but *thy* God: as if he hardly dare call Isaiah's God his God, being so conscious of his own unworthiness.

"*Will hear,*" &c.; i. e. Will attend to and take notice of; and in consequence inflict a just chastisement upon him.

V. 7. See verses 36, 37.

V. 8, 9. Libnah was a town situated about ten miles from Lachish; thither Sennacherib had removed his army during the absence of Rabshakeh, and there that general found him upon his return from Jerusalem. But soon afterwards Sennacherib was informed that Tirhakah,[1] the king of Cush or Ethiopia (see chap. 20) was coming against him with an army; and thinking perhaps that Hezekiah had called him to his assistance he again sent messengers to Jerusalem to terrify him into submission.

V. 14. "*The letter.*" It was therefore a written message that the ambassadors brought.

"*And spread it before Jehovah.*" There is a beautiful simplicity in this action deserving the attention of us all. Hezekiah was well aware that the omniscient Jehovah knew the contents of the letter long before he had opened it. It was not therefore to make him acquainted with what he was before ignorant of that Hezekiah spread the letter; but it was to say in effect, 'Jehovah, I go not to man to consult about this letter, but to thee, who alone art able to counsel and strengthen me; I have opened it in thy sight, and would cast all my care upon thee.'

V. 16. "*That dwellest between the cherubim.*" The Cherubim were two figures of gigantic size carved in wood, and overlaid with pure gold, which were placed

[1] It is worth remarking, that the name of this king, whose very existence some have denied, is found amongst the names of the Egyptian kings who reigned about this period, in the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphical writings, which have been lately deciphered by means of a key, originally discovered by one of our own countrymen.

over the ark of the covenant in the most holy place, with their wings touching each other, and having their faces turned downwards towards the ark and the mercy-seat on which it stood. In the two accounts given of their formation, Exod. xxxvii. 7. and 1 Kings vi. 23: we are not told what sort of faces they had; it is simply said. "*They made two Cherubim.*" Expositors differ very much as to their signification.—Some take them to be an emblematical representation of the Trinity; others suppose them to represent the angels, *who desire to look into* the mysteries of redemption. If the living creatures seen by Ezekiel, who had each of them four faces, viz. on one side the face of a man and a lion, and on the other of an ox and an eagle; (chap. i. 10,) if, I say, these were the same in appearance as the Cherubim, then it is clear that they were emblematical abstractedly of *wisdom, courage, strength* and *swiftness*; but whether they represented these qualities in the Deity, or in any of his creatures, it is hard to say. —However this may be, the Jews were taught to consider Jehovah as being in an especial manner present, "*between the Cherubim.*" Thus it is said, Exod. xxv. 22. "*I will meet thee—between the Cherubim.*" And Psalm lxxx. 1. "*Thou that dwellest between the Cherubim, shine forth.*" Not that Jehovah was essentially more present in that particular spot than anywhere else; but there it was that he appointed the Israelites to inquire of him and promised to answer them. And what could be more encouraging to them than the assurance that he sat as it were upon the mercy-seat between the Cherubim who regarded it, and seemed to say, that mercy was his distinguishing attribute?

V. 22. "*The Virgin.*" Jerusalem is called figuratively a virgin, because she had not been polluted by idolatry, like all other cities.

V. 24. "*By the multitude,*" &c. Sennacherib impiously ascribed all his victories and conquests to his own skill and courage, and the numerical force of his army. He is here represented as boasting that he had already taken the principal cities of Judæa, and was about soon to get possession of Jerusalem itself.

V. 25. "*I have digged.*" The meaning is, I have succeeded in my attempts—I have accomplished all my undertakings. This also was probably a common mode of expressing self-gratulation, as a man digging for a well when he came to the water would cry out in this manner.

"*And have dried up,*" &c. That is, the ditches which surround forts, but which Sennacherib boasts were no defence against him. He passed them as easily as if they had been dried up as soon as he approached.

V. 26. God himself is here supposed to take up the discourse and in this and the three following verses, addresses Sennacherib, to whom he shews the impiety and folly of his vain boasting. Did he not know that all his victories were owing to the appointment of God, who long before had *designed* to make use of him as an instrument to punish the inhabitants of the earth, more especially his rebellious people, and *now* had raised him up and strengthened him that he might subdue nations, and destroy their cities? The "*it*" refers to the counsel and work of God.

V. 28. "*I know thy sitting down,*" &c. That is, I see and take notice of all thy doings. Thus David in Psalm cxxxix.—"*Thou knowest my down sitting and mine up rising, and art acquainted with all my ways.*"

V. 29. "*I will put my hook in thy nose.*" The meaning is, "When I have done with thee, I will turn thee back again, as easily as a bullock is turned with a goading hook, or a horse with a bit.

V. 30. This part of the prophecy is evidently especially addressed to Hezekiah, to whom a sign is now given from Jehovah of the certainty of his deliverance. This sign was a miraculous supply of food for the two following years. The Jews being shut up in their cities and towns whilst the army of Sennacherib was laying waste the country, they could not pursue the labours of agriculture and till the land; but God promised that they should have a sufficient supply of grain from the produce of the seed that had been shaken out in gathering in the harvest of that year; and from this again enough would be produced in the same manner to suffice for the year following; after which they would be able to plough and sow the land without molestation, as the enemy before the expiration of that period would be destroyed. But here a difficulty occurs which has not been satisfactorily explained by any commentator I have met with. The history seems to intimate that the destruction of Sennacherib's army took place immediately after the deliverance of this prophecy; how then could events which were to be two years in accomplishing, be considered as a sign of what was to be done immediately? The only way, it appears to me, of resolving this difficulty is by supposing the circumstances to have been as follows.—After Sennacherib heard that the king of Ethiopia was coming against him, he left Libnah with the greater part of his army to meet him: and having spent two years in Egypt, and vanquished Tirhaka, and so accomplished the prophecy of Isaiah contained in chap. xx. he returned with his victorious army intending to punish the Jews for not submitting to him; but when he arrived near Jerusalem, then it was that God sent forth his angel and destroyed the Assyrian army. This hypothesis, besides that it resolves the above-mentioned

difficulty, accounts for many things which otherwise appear paradoxical and inconsistent. Nor is it any objection that the history does not seem to imply that any time elapsed between the delivery of the prophecy and its fulfilment; for we find no more intimation of any interval between the events recorded in verses 1 and 2, of chap. xxxvi. although it is plain a year at least must have intervened. The Book of Kings indeed speaks as if God sent his angel to smite the Assyrians on the very night of the day that Hezekiah sent to Isaiah. It is said, "*In that night,*" &c. but the Sept. read the words thus; "*And it was night, and the angel of Jehovah,*" &c. which seems to be the true reading. 2 Kings xix. 35.

V. 31, 32. Isaiah may justly be called an evangelical prophet; for in almost all his predictions we find something relative to the Gospel dispensation. These verses without doubt refer primarily to the diffusion of the knowledge of the true religion by means of the pious remnant among the Jews at the time the Son of God appeared upon earth. They however will yet have a plenary accomplishment in the preaching of the Jews upon their conversion. Compare Micah v. 7.

V. 33, 34. Hence it is probable, that the destruction of the hundred and eighty five thousand took place at Lachish, where Sennacherib had arrived on his way to Jerusalem from Egypt; in consequence of which he returned home in haste, by the very same route he had come, without so much as shooting an arrow into it.

V. 35. "*My servant David's sake.*" God had promised to David that his kingdom should endure for ever: (2 Sam. vii. 16.) Yet perhaps, the reference is rather to the mystical David, Jesus Christ, *through* whom all the promises are made, and *in* whom they are all "yea and amen." 2 Cor. i. 20.

V. 36. Much has been written by some commentators upon the manner in which this destruction was effected, whether by lightning, or pestilence, &c. I cannot see the use of such discussions. What more do we require to know than that, "*the angel of Jehovah went forth and smote the Assyrians?* Their destruction, that is, was the effect of a miraculous agency.

"*When they arose.*" Either the remnant of the Assyrians, or the inhabitants of the city.

V. 37. With some diffidence I would explain this verse thus; So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed *from Libnah*, and went *into Egypt; and the destruction of his army having taken place on his way back*, he returned *to his own country*, and dwelt at Nineveh.

REMARKS.

The instructive lessons to be derived from this history are many and obvious. In the conduct of Hezekiah we have an example for our imitation; in that of Sennacherib and his generals, we see strikingly exemplified the arrogance and impotency of man. The Christian in this world, like the Jews when shut up in the city of Jerusalem, is surrounded by numerous and powerful enemies. Satan, the world, and his own sinful passions, threaten him with destruction. How can he hope to resist and overcome them? He must imitate the example of Hezekiah. He must imitate his wisdom, his prudence, and above all his faith. He relied implicitly upon the protection of Jehovah his God. He knew that he only could deliver him from his enemies; and it was therefore his first care to go and pour out his heart before him. Yet he did not after this sit down idly, without attempting to do any thing on his part

for the defence of the city. *He stopped the fountains which were without the city, that the enemy might not obtain water: he built up the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers; and made darts and shields in abundance:* 2 Chron. xxxii. 3—5. Thus while he looked to Jehovah as the only sure defence, he neglected none of those means which natural prudence would suggest on such occasions. And so the Christian, in contending against his spiritual enemies, must place his reliance simply upon the grace and power of his almighty Saviour. While he *presses forward to the mark for the prize of his high calling, he* must *look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith.* Yet must he be careful himself to guard against the dangers with which he is surrounded. He must keep an observant watch over those inlets of sinful desires, his eyes and ears, which often betray us to the enemy. He must be careful to avoid all those persons, places, and books, which are calculated in any degree to draw away his heart from God. In short he must *work out his salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do.* And so doing he has no reason to fear the result. He has the same faithful God to deal with as Hezekiah; the same unchangeable Jehovah. He is still alone "the God, even he, of all the kingdoms of the earth." He is still as able to succour his people in time of trouble and perplexity, as in the days of Isaiah; and he will therefore surely hear the prayers of those that call upon him, and deliver them out of all their distresses. Only let us then, like Hezekiah, spread out our griefs before him, and like him we shall obtain relief.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVII.

(1) Heb. "*Behold I am about to put a wind, or spirit upon him, or in him.*" It may mean either, as in our translation, that God would terrify him by some external indications of wrath; or, which I prefer, that he would fill his soul with fearful apprehensions.

(2) Heb. "*That thou Jehovah art by thyself;*" i. e. the only God: there is none that can claim fellowship or equality with thee.

(3) שמעתי *I have heard.* This word, as Bishop Lowth observes, is necessary to the sense, and is found in the other copy; 2 Kings xix. 20.

(4) Instead of גליהם Bishop Lowth would read גויים upon the authority of the Septuagint. He translates the words, "*warlike nations.*" The usual rendering is certainly not very satisfactory in a grammatical point of view: but yet, I think, the passage is not of sufficient importance to warrant a change in the text.

SECT. 34. Chap. XXXVIII.

This chapter gives an account of Hezekiah's recovery from a dangerous sickness with which he was afflicted about the time that Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem with destruction; and of a promise made to him by God, confirmed by a miraculous sign, that he should survive fifteen years. It contains also a song of praise composed by him upon his recovery.

ISAIAH, Sect. 34. Chap. XXXVIII. 1—8.

1. In those days Hezekiah was sick with a mortal (1) disease. And Isaiah the son of Amoz, the prophet, came to him, and said unto him; Thus saith Jehovah, Set thy house in order:
2. for thou shalt die and not live. And Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto
3. Jehovah; and said; Remember now, I beseech thee, O Jehovah, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thine eyes— and Hezekiah wept bitterly.
4. Then the word of Jehovah came to Isaiah,
5. saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah,
   Thus saith Jehovah the God of David thy Father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold I will add to thy days fifteen years.
6. And I will deliver thee and this city, from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will
7. defend this city. And this shall be a sign unto thee from Jehovah, that Jehovah will do
8. this thing which he hath spoken: Behold I cause to return back the shadow of the (2) steps, where the sun is gone down upon the steps of Ahaz, ten steps backwards. And the

sun returned ten steps, by the steps over which it had gone down.

9. *The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, after he had been sick and was recovered of his sickness.*

10. I said; In the prime (3) of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave; (4)
I am deprived of the residue of my years.

11. I said, I shall not see Jehovah in the land of the living;
I shall no more behold man with those that dwell upon the earth.

12. My habitation is taken away and removed from me, like a shepherd's tent:
Thou hast cut (5) off my life, as a weaver cutteth his web from the thread.
Before the day (6) be spent thou wilt make an end of me.

13. I roared (7) until morning, for as a lion breaketh he all my bones.
Before (8) the day be spent thou wilt make an end of me.

14. As a stork, or a swallow, so I cry out;
As a dove do I moan: mine eyes fail with looking upwards.
Jehovah, I am oppressed; be thou my surety.

15. What shall I say? He hath both spoken to me and hath done it:
I will (9) think all the years of my life upon the bitterness of my soul.

16. Jehovah, for these ([10]) shall I live; yea all of them wilt thou quicken my spirit.
For thou wilt both restore me to health, and make me to live.
17. Behold, instead of peace I had very much bitterness;
But thou did'st keep back my soul from the pit of destruction.
For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.
18. For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee;
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
19. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day:
The father to the children shall make known thy faithfulness.
20. Jehovah was ready to save me, therefore will we sing my songs
All the days of our life in the house of Jehovah.
21. Now Isaiah had said, Let them bring a lump of figs, and lay them bruised upon the boil;
22. and he recovered. Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of Jehovah?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVIII. 1, 2.

V. 1. Hezekiah reigned twentynine years, and lived fifteen after his recovery from his sickness, which consequently must have occurred in the fourteenth year of his reign; that is, the same year that Sennacherib came the first time into Judæa.

"*Thou shalt die,*" &c. This prediction, as is evident from the event, like Jonah's concerning Nineveh, was conditional. God revealed to Hezekiah that the sickness with which he was now seized would prove fatal, unless some miraculous power were exerted to save him. The disease was incurable by ordinary means, and if left to take its course would carry him off. He was therefore commanded to set his house in order; or, to give directions to his household as to what he wished to be done after his death.

How important is it that persons should settle their worldly affairs whilst they are in health, in order that they may be free from all perplexity and anxiety about such things when laid upon a sick bed.

V. 2. It is somewhat difficult to account for the love of life manifested by Hezekiah upon this occasion. It does not seem consistent with the character of a man who lives by faith and not by sight;—with one whose treasure is in heaven, and not upon earth. Among other reasons which may be assigned for this apparent inconsistency in so good a man we may notice the two following:—

In the First place, Hezekiah at this time had no son; he was therefore naturally anxious as to the succession. Secondly, his country was in a most deplorable state, and inevitable ruin was apparently hanging over it. These two considerations made him wish that his life might be prolonged, in the hope of seeing a son of his own born to inherit the throne, and his country freed from the ravages of the Assyrian army. That this latter was what principally weighed upon his mind, may be inferred from the promise made in verse 8. Still I confess, Hezekiah appears to have shewn in this instance great want of faith, and proper reliance upon the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah. Surely the believer ought never to think the time appointed by God for him to leave the world too soon. Rather should he emulate the apostle, who, *was willing to remain* as long as his Lord had anything for him to do, yet *desired rather to depart*.[1] We must however allow something for the imperfect revelation, comparatively speaking, under which Hezekiah lived. The reader should not forget to observe that although the king's prayer was heard, his life being prolonged and three years afterwards a son given him, he gained nothing: for he lived to hear the destruction of his city and kingdom predicted, and to see those germs of evil in Manasseh which afterwards burst forth. This should teach us that God knows better than we do what is good for us.

V. 3. We have here an instance, and there are several others in the Bible, in which a true servant of God seems to plead his own righteousness as if it were meritorious and could claim a reward. And were there no other passages of a contrary tendency we might perhaps be justified in inferring from hence that, as

[1] Phil. i. 23.

some say, good works merit the forgiveness of former sins, and entitle us to eternal life. But when we find the holiest men exclaiming, Behold I am vile![1] When we find Christ tells his disciples, "After ye have done all that is commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants"—can we for a moment suppose that our works have any merit? But how then comes it to pass that we find such men as Hezekiah, and Nehemiah, (chap. v. 19.) making mention of their good works and apparently pleading the merit of them before God? I answer, they do so, not in the way of boasting, or as founding any claim upon them to God's favour, but they refer to them only as testifying the sincerity of their profession, as evidences of their being partakers of the grace of God, and entitled to the promises he makes to his people.

V. 5. Hezekiah is the first and only instance of a man who knew exactly how long he had to live. The reason why the precise period for which his life would be lengthened was fixed, was probably to make him the more sensible that it was entirely a gift from God. We need not be anxious for such a communication.—Happy rather ought we to think ourselves that the hour of our departure hence is hid from us—yet the consideration of our utter ignorance upon this point should make us ever watchful. How solemn the thought that the author who writes, and the reader who reads, e'er to-morrow's sun arise, may have done with temporal things and be fixed in an eternal state!

V. 6. Hence it is evident that Jerusalem was at this time threatened by the Assyrian army.

V. 7, 8. Hezekiah had asked a sign from Jehovah that he should recover, and the prophet gave him his choice, whether the shadow should advance suddenly

[1] Job xl. 4. Luke xvii. 10.

ten steps, or go back the same distance. He chose the latter: 2 Kings xx. 9. Commentators have attempted various explanations of the manner in which this sign was given. The general idea is, that it was by means of a sun-dial: but upon what grounds I cannot imagine, as there is no mention of a sun-dial in the original, nor is it likely that Hezekiah when lying upon a sick bed would be able to see one. The most probable account of the transaction, it appears to me, is, that as the king was lying upon his bed, he saw before him the steps of his father's palace, the shadow of which had already passed upon ten of them, and that at his request it returned off, and a full light was thrown upon them as at noon. Whether this was effected by the retrogade motion of the earth, or by a preternatural refraction of light upon the steps, is not very important; but I can see no objection to the latter supposition. The sign would have been equally satisfactory to the mind of Hezekiah in whichever way it was accomplished, and this was the only object in view. Now when there are two ways of effecting the same thing, we may infer that God will chose that which is most simple and least deranges the course of nature. Yet to maintain, as some infidels have done, respecting the miracle, supposing it to have been effected by the retrogade motion of the earth, that the thing itself is absurd and impossible, is surely the greatest of all absurdities. For who first set the earth and all the systems of the universe in motion? Was it not, even according to their own ideas, the eternal Creator, whom we call God? And shall we then presume to say that he has not power to alter the direction he has once given them? Would it not be as great folly to make such an assertion, as if two flies which had been sitting for an hour or two upon the hand of a clock, were to determine

in their wisdom that the maker of it could never turn them backwards, because during the time they had been sitting upon them, they had continually moved forwards?

V. 10. In this and the four following verses Hezekiah records his feelings during the time of his sickness. In addition to what has been said already upon the desire expressed by the king for the continuance of life, we may remark, with reference to the expressions in these verses, that long life was the peculiar blessing promised to the Israelites if they obeyed the fifth commandment; "*That thy days may be long in the land which thy God giveth thee.*" Hence, to be cut off in the prime of manhood, was considered a curse, and a mark of God's displeasure, and on this ground alone Hezekiah might mourn and weep at the thought.

V. 11. Did the pious king doubt the reality of a future state? Did he suppose that he was about to be annihilated, that he spoke so despondingly of not again *beholding Jehovah in the land of the living, &c.?* I confess, I can see no way of accounting for such expressions as these, but by supposing either, that at the time they were uttered Hezekiah's understanding and faith were clouded and weakened by the violence of disease; or, that believers under the Old Testament did not anticipate any positive, conscious enjoyment, until the resurrection. That the former was the case in the present instance, is highly probable. Hezekiah records his feelings immediately upon his being informed that his death was near, and whilst suffering great bodily pain. Now there is something terrible in the act of death itself even to the believer. Death is an unnatural thing, brought into the world by sin, and the mind shrinks from it. The Christian desires not death, but the after consequences; that is, the

being clothed with a sinless, glorious, incorruptible body, instead of such an one as we now carry about with us. Thus the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. v. 4, "*Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*" Meaning that he did not desire to die, but to put on that immortal body which he was sure of having in a future state.

V. 12. Hezekiah compares his body to a shepherd's tent, and his soul, or living principle by which it was sustained, to a weaver's web. As a shepherd when about to change his station takes down his tent; or as the weaver when he has finished his web cuts it off from the threads by which it is fastened to the loom; so he thought God was about to destroy his body and cut short his life, before the day was spent.

V. 14. "*Be thou my surety.*" In the midst of his sufferings, whilst his lips quivered with agony, and he groaned inwardly with racking pain, the believing king still looked upwards. Feeling oppressed with the weight of his afflictions, he calls upon Jehovah to become *his surety;* that is, to stand, as it were, in his place, and take a part in those sufferings which he was unable by himself to bear. And thus the sinner, who feels that his sins are too great a burden for his own strength to support, may cry with confidence, "*Lord, be thou my surety,*" to that Saviour who has said, "*Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

V. 15. *What shall I say?* &c. How shall I express my gratitude to Jehovah for his goodness and mercy? He hath both sent me an answer to my prayer, and hath performed my desire.

"*I will think all the years of my life,*" &c. In answer to the preceding question proposed by himself, the king declares his resolution to reflect all the days

of his life upon the bitterness of soul he experienced during his sickness, and upon the goodness of God in delivering him from it. This would be the most effectual way of cherishing those feelings of love and gratitude he desired to keep alive in his heart. How differently would many feel and act if they were to imitate this pious king's example, and reflect all their lives upon the bitterness of their soul in the time of sickness?

V. 16. Hezekiah here declares his full belief in the promise of Jehovah. He was assured that he should be restored to health, and live the exact number of years the prophet had foretold.

V. 17. "*For thou hast cast all my sins,*" &c. Disease is the effect of sin: therefore the removal of Hezekiah's complaint was a sensible evidence that God had forgiven that particular sin, on account of which he seems to have supposed he was afflicted. So our Lord proved that he had power to forgive sins, by healing the paralytic man. (Matt. ix.)

V. 18. This verse must be read in connexion with the 16th. The same difficulty occurs here as in verse 11; the words seeming to imply that the speaker had no hope beyond this life. We know, however, that such a conclusion is entirely inconsistent with the general tenor of revelation, and more particularly with the express declaration of Christ, who tells us, that the resurrection of the dead was plainly taught by Moses, Matt. xxii. 23. What shall we say then? I own I cannot acquiesce in the usual solution of the difficulty, viz. that the meaning is merely that the dead cannot praise Jehovah, nor hope for the fulfilment of his promise *upon earth*. This we know; but would it not be better to praise him in heaven than on earth? And is not actual possession better than bare hope?

Why then should Hezekiah speak of these circumstances as a reason why death was to be dreaded and life desired? These considerations almost force us to conclude, that himself and other pious persons who lived under the Mosaic dispensation, although they might believe that the soul, after its departure from the body, enjoyed a sort of indefinable happiness; yet supposed it to be unconscious of personal identity, and incapable of perfect enjoyment, until it should be again united to the body at the resurrection.

V. 19. "*The father to the children,*" &c. Either, I as a father will make known to my children thy faithfulness in the fulfilment of thy promises; or, generally, fathers shall make known to their children what thou hast done for me.

V. 20. From this verse we may infer, that the preceding sacred ode was sung daily in the temple during Hezekiah's life time. Thus, in order that he might never forget the mercy of God, he composed a hymn, to remind him by its daily use of what had been done for him. What a striking example for the imitation of us all.

V. 21, 22. These two verses inform us of the means which were employed for Hezekiah's recovery; and that the sign accompanying it was granted at his request. From the former circumstance a very important inference may be drawn. Notwithstanding God had positively promised to extend Hezekiah's life fifteen years; Isaiah employed means for the removal of his disease, without which, we may suppose, he would certainly have died. Does not this then teach us, that the certainty of obtaining an object will not prevent a person of a sound mind from using those means which are ordinarily employed for its attainment? And do we not learn hence the futility of the

argument commonly urged against the doctrine of final perseverance, (supposing it to be taught in scripture,) that it has a tendency to make men careless and immoral, seeing that they think themselves certain of being saved? For why should this belief cause any person to disregard those means and rules which he knows are essential to salvation, any more than the promise of God to Hezekiah made Isaiah neglect the use of all means for the furtherance of his recovery? The truth of this, and of every other Christian doctrine, ought indeed to be argued, not from the inferences which may be deduced from it either way, but from the express statements of the inspired writers.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

(1) Heb. Was sick unto death.

(2) מעלות *The steps.*—The generality of translators render this word *degrees*, and שמש in the next clause, *sun-dial*; but upon what authority I cannot discover. In no other instance does the first word signify *degrees*, nor the second *a dial*. I have therefore translated them according to their usual meaning. See Taylor's Concordance under the words עלה and שמש.

(3) דמי. Two words, בקע and חצה, nearly allied in sense to the root of this, signify, *a half*. May not then בדמי mean here, *in the half*, that is, *in the prime of my days*?

(4) See Crit. Note, Vol. i. p. 134.

(5) קפדת, in the second person. Bp. Lowth renders it in the third person singular passive, according to the Syriac, Chal. and Vulg.

(6) Heb. *From day to night.*—i. e. in the course of a whole day.

(7) "*I roared.*"—For שויתי the Chaldee has נהמית: he read שאגתי, the proper term for the roaring of a lion; often applied to the deep groaning of men in sicknesses—See Psalm xxii. 2. xxxii. 3. Bp. Lowth.

(8) This line is not found repeated in the Syriac Version, and a MS. omits it. Bp. Lowth supposes it to have been inserted a second time in the Hebrew text by mistake.

(9) אדדה—*I will think.*—The primary meaning of the verb is to walk gently or slowly. Hence it comes naturally to signify, to meditate, or think; because people generally move slowly when engaged in meditation.

(10) This passage is certainly perfectly inexplicable as it stands in the Hebrew printed editions of the Bible. None of the ancient Versions agree with the present reading. Literally translated it would run thus; "*Lord, for or upon them* (masculine) *they shall live, and for all in them* (feminine) *my life of my spirit*," &c. But if we make the הם *those* refer to the years in the preceding line, and instead of יחיו read, יחי, instead of בהן, בהם, and instead of חיי, תחיי, all obscurities both in the sense and construction will be removed.

SECT. 35. CHAP. XXXIX.

In the following chapter Hezekiah is exhibited in a new light. Elated on account of the compliment paid to him by the king of Babylon, who had sent an embassy to congratulate him upon his safety, and to inquire into the nature of the miracle that had been done, (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.) he made an ostentatious display of his riches and arms;—in consequence of which the prophet Isaiah was sent to reprove him, and to forewarn him of the evils that were coming upon his posterity from the very people whose alliance he now courted.

These circumstances occurred probably soon after the destruction of Sennacherib's army.

ISAIAH, Sect. 35. Chap. XXXIX. 1—6.

1. At that time Merodach Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent a letter and a present to Hezekiah, having heard that he had
2. been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was pleased on account of them, and he shewed the messengers who brought them, the house of his precious things; the silver and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment; and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures; there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Heze-
3. kiah shewed them not. Then Isaiah the prophet came to the king Hezekiah, and said to him; What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They have come unto me from a distant country,
4. from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thy house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in my house have they seen; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not
5. shewed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah,
6. Hear the word of Jehovah God of hosts; Behold, the days come, that all that is in thy house, and

that thy fathers have treasured up until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be
7. left, saith Jehovah. And of thy sons that shall spring from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.
8. And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, Good is the word of Jehovah, which thou hast spoken. And he added, For there shall be peace and faithfulness in my days.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIX. 1—6.

V. 1. *Merodach Baladan.* The father of this king is called by profane authors Belesus or Belesis. He was originally only governor of Babylon, but having entered into a conspiracy with Arbaces, governor of Media, the two together dethroned Sandanapalus, who then held the Assyrian empire, of which the Babylonian territory formed a part, and divided his dominions between them. Arbaces, or as he is called in scripture, Tiglath Pileser, took Media; and Baladan, Babylon.[1] His son it was who on this occasion sent to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery from his sickness; and also perhaps upon the miraculous deliverance of his city from the Assyrian army.

V. 5, 6. "*Hear the word of Jehovah,*" &c. This is clearly the language of reproof. But what was Hezekiah's fault? It consisted in this, that he was too proud of his riches and military stores. He displayed them to the Ambassadors of the king of Babylon, in a manner calculated to give them the idea that, like other kings, he placed his chief happiness and confidence in them; whereas he ought to have shewn by a contrary conduct, that as a servant of the true God he did not attach that value to such things which others did. He appears also to have been too desirous, by this ostentatious display, of gaining the respect and alliance

[1] Prideaux's Connections, Book i.

of an idolatrous king, from whom he might hope for assistance in case of another invasion. Perhaps it may be asked, How came Hezekiah by all this wealth, having so recently been obliged to cut off the gold from the doors of the temple to answer Sennacherib's demands? This difficulty, however, is easily solved. These riches were the spoil of the Assyrian army, with which they returned laden from Egypt, but which was left in the camp after the slaughter of the hundred and eighty-five thousand. See chap. xxxiii. 23.

V. 7. Daniel, who was of the seed royal, and a descendant of Hezekiah, is an instance of the accomplishment of this part of the prediction. Dan. i. 3.

V. 8. Hezekiah, in the spirit of a true servant of Jehovah, acknowledges the justice of the sentence he had just heard pronounced upon his people. Because he adds, *For there shall be peace and faithfulness in my days*, we are not to conclude that he was indifferent to the welfare of his posterity: he merely thus expresses his thankfulness to God for sparing the people during his lifetime.

REMARKS.

Christians of every rank and class in society may learn here an useful lesson. We are all too apt, like Hezekiah, to pride ourselves upon unimportant external distinctions. We too often forget that we have renounced the *pomps* and *vanities* of this evil world, as well as the sinful lusts of the flesh. But this ought not to be: every person at least who professes to have a greater regard than ordinary to religion, should remember that he is bound, not only to feel comparatively indifferent to those things which others

[illegible] by [illegible] in a different manner [illegible] the generality [illegible], beauty, and honours, one [illegible] things worth living [illegible] happiness. But [illegible] Above all, in [illegible] might we not to [illegible] seem to set a high value [illegible] We must [illegible] the abundance of the [illegible] Would we then avoid the [illegible] we must endeavour to have our hearts rightly affected towards every earthly object. We shall speak as we feel. Again, many are often far too ready to court the acquaintance of persons of doubtful character, merely on account of their rank or riches, in the hope of deriving from them some secular advantage, as Hezekiah courted the friendship of the Babylonish king. Does not the final issue of this alliance shew the folly of such conduct? How striking the circumstance, that the very people from whom he looked for help, should be destined in a few years to burn his city, and en-slave his posterity! Thus will it ever be—If Christians join hand in hand with the wicked purely from interested motives, instead of profit they will in the end reap only vexation and sorrow. *Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils!*

SECT. 36. CHAP. XL.

WE now enter upon a new series of prophecies, delivered, probably, in the latter part of Hezekiah's reign, or in the beginning of that of his successor. They are principally of a consolatory description, and were doubtless intended primarily to comfort the pious Jews under the anticipation of the judgment predicted in the foregoing chapter, viz. the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the Jewish people. In the interpretation of them, commentators have adopted different schemes. Some are of opinion, and amongst these is Vitringa, that the deliverance of the church from spiritual bondage, and all the other blessings attendant upon the advent of Christ are alone intended, and that there is no reference to the return from Babylon. Others think, that the prophet speaks primarily of this latter event, but in connexion with the other more excellent deliverance. According to the principles laid down in the Preliminary Dissertation, page 31, the following exposition is founded upon the latter scheme. There seems indeed to me, to be three grand events to which these prophecies more or less refer. First, the return of the Jews from Babylon upon the occasion of Cyrus; secondly the coming of Christ in a state of humiliation and suffering; thirdly, his second coming in glory, when, and not before, all things that are here predicted will be fully accomplished. The present chapter has reference to the two former events, and speaks of the one as typical of the other. The connection of its several parts will be shewn in the exposition. I shall only here remark further, that these twenty seven chapters unquestionably form the most beautiful, grand, and interesting portion of the scriptures of the Old Testament. I feel persuaded that no one can read them with seriousness and attention, without rising up from the perusal with better thoughts and feelings than he had when he sat down. Only let any one set himself, with prayer for God's assistance, to read one of these chapters daily; and before he comes to the end of the book, he will infallibly find his understanding much enlightened, his ideas greatly enlarged, his affections purified and raised up above the follies and trifles of this present world; his mind filled with the noblest ideas of the wisdom, love, and power of God; in one word he will find himself a new creature, old things will have passed away, all things will have become new. Such I am bold to say, will be the result of the serious and diligent study of these sublime and heavenly writings.

ISAIAH. Sect. 36. Chap. XL. 1—7.

1. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.—
2. Speak ye comfortably (l) to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,
   That her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned;
   For she hath received from the hand of Jehovah, double for all her sins.
3. A voice crieth in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah;
   Make straight in the desert, a high way for our God."
4. Every valley shall be raised up, and every mountain and hill be laid low,
   And the crooked ways shall become straight, and the rough places smooth;
5. And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;
   For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.
6. A voice saith, Cry! And I said, What shall I cry?
   All flesh is grass; and all its glory as the flower of the field;
7. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,
   When a wind from Jehovah bloweth upon it—

(Surely the people is as grass)
8. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,
But the word of our God shall stand for ever.
9. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee upon a high hill;
O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength:
Lift it up, fear not: Say to the cities of Judah,
10. Behold your God! Behold the (2) Lord, Jehovah!
With might he cometh, and his arm ruleth for him:
Behold his reward is with him, and his hire before him.
11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd;
He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom,
And shall gently lead those that are with young.
12. Who hath measured the waters in his palm, and hath meted the heavens with a span?
And hath comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,
And hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?
13. Who hath directed the spirit of Jehovah, or what man hath counselled him?
14. With whom took he counsel, that he might instruct him, and teach him the path of judgment?
And teach him knowledge, and make him know the way of understanding?

15. Lo, the nations are accounted as a drop in the bucket, as the dust in the scales:
Behold, he taketh up the islands as an atom.
16. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor all its cattle for a burnt offering.
17. All nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted as nothing and vanity.
18. To whom then will ye liken God? or to what resemblance will ye compare him?
19. To the molten image which the workman hath cast?
And which the silversmith hath spread over with gold,
And hath forged for it chains of silver?
20. The poor man (3) that hath no oblation, chooseth for himself a tree that will not rot;
He seeketh a skilful workman to set up an image that will not be moved.
21. Will ye not understand? Will ye not hearken?
Hath it not been declared to you from the beginning?
Have ye not known from the foundations of the earth?
22. It is he who sitteth upon the orb of the earth, and its inhabitants are as grasshoppers;
Who extendeth the heavens as a curtain, and stretcheth them out as a tent to dwell in:
23. Who bringeth princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth a vain thing;
24. Surely they shall not be planted, they shall not be sown:

Yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth.
He doth but blow upon them, and they wither,
And then a whirlwind carrieth them away like stubble.

25. To whom then will ye liken me, and we shall be (4) equal? saith the Holy One.

26. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold:—Who hath created these?
He that bringeth forth their host by number, who calleth them all by name,
By the greatness of his might, and the strength of his power,
Not one of them shall be found wanting.

27. Why sayest thou, O Jacob; why speakest thou O Israel;
My way is hid from Jehovah, and my cause is unheeded (5) by my God?

28. Dost thou not know? Hast thou not heard?
That the eternal God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth,
Fainteth not, neither is weary, and that there is no searching his knowledge?

29. It is he who giveth strength to the weary,
And to them that have no power he increaseth might.

30. Even the youths faint, and are weary;
And the chosen men fall, to rise (6) no more:

31. But those who trust upon Jehovah, shall renew their strength;
Their wings shall spring afresh like the eagle's;
They shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XL. 1, 2.

V. 1, 2. These two verses contain the principal argument of the remainder of the book, the object of which is to speak *comfort* to the church to the end of the world. The persons addressed are ministers of religion in general, who are thus directed to comfort and cheer the hearts of the faithful, by setting before them the great things that God has done and will do for his church. The exhortation is equally applicable to those inspired Jewish teachers who lived about the time of the return from Babylon, to the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, and to ministers in the present day. The first are called upon to console their countrymen with the hope of a speedy return to their native land; the second, to administer still greater consolation by preaching the advent of the long-expected Messiah, forgiveness of sins by his death, and reconciliation to God; the last, are directed to encourage the church with the hope of the speedy destruction of all her enemies, and of the approach of that glorious period when all her troubles will be at an end, and she shall receive from Jehovah eternal recompense. Nor will indeed the declaration contained in the second verse be fully accomplished until the consummation of all things. Can we say that the church's warfare has ever yet been at an end? Did it end when the pious remnant returned from Jerusalem? Did it end when Christ came upon earth? Has it yet

ended? The experience of every Christian, and the state of the world, answer in the negative. The comfort then, with which, as ministers, we are to comfort the church, is this; that the time is at hand when all the enemies of Christ shall be put under his feet, and her warfare be ended. There is indeed another sense in which we may understand this command. We may say to every individual member of the church; "Christian, thy warfare is accomplished; the great captain of thy salvation has fought, and won the day. Upon Calvary he triumphed over the enemies of thy soul, and made an open shew of thy conquered foes. Thou hast only to keep thyself under his banners and thy warfare is, in a sense, accomplished. For though thou wilt still have enemies to contend with, the victory is certain, and the crown of righteousness thine own."

"*Double for all her sins.*" These words are usually explained to signify, that, speaking hyperbolically, the Jewish church had received a punishment more than equivalent to its sins, in being carried away captive to Babylon. But Vitringa gives a different interpretation. He thinks that double *consolation* is meant, rather than double punishment. As if it had been written, "*She hath now received from the hand of Jehovah a recompense double the punishment that had been inflicted upon her for her sins.*" This, I think, is the most consistent exposition of the passage. Thus St. Paul; "I reckon the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii.

V. 3, 4. "*A voice crieth in the wilderness,*" &c. Transported into future times, the prophet seems to hear a voice, as of a royal herald, making a proclamation in the desert, and calling upon all who heard

him, to prepare a way for his master to pass through it. Now it is well known that the direct route from Babylon to Judæa lay through that vast, sandy, desert tract of country which we now call Arabia Deserta. It is therefore probable, that there is an allusion here to the proclamation made by Cyrus in the first year of his reign, in which he commanded his subjects to assist the Jews in returning to their native land by every means in their power. But can this embrace the full accomplishment of the prophecy? Was the glory of Jehovah then revealed *to all flesh*? The return of the Jews to Jerusalem, considering how small a company they formed, was but an insignificant event in profane history; and but a very small portion of the heathen world saw anything of the hand of Jehovah displayed in it; so that we can only look upon this event as an earnest of that more perfect fulfilment of the prediction to which the Evangelists direct us. From them we learn that *the voice* is the voice of John the Baptist; and *the desert*, an emblem of the spiritual condition of the Jews at the time of his appearance amongst them. He "prepared the way for the coming of the Lord" into this desert by *preaching repentance, and the remission of sins*. (Mark i. 4.) For by thus declaring the sinfulness of man and his need of repentance, he prepared men's minds for the reception of the gospel, the chief obstacle to which is, *self-righteousness*,—those high thoughts of ourselves that exalt themselves in opposition to the knowledge of Christ. These are *the mountains* that must *be levelled* before we can cordially embrace the doctrine of salvation by the cross.

V. 5. The glory of Jehovah was revealed at the coming of Christ, by the display which was then made of his mercy, love, and holiness, (for it is in these that

the glory of God consists) in the wonderful method he had devised for the redemption and salvation of man; which was now for the first time made manifest, having only been shadowed forth before in types and figures. Yet this was only a *preparatory* fulfilment of the prediction, if I may so express myself. He has declared that his glory shall one day *fill the whole earth*, we must therefore still look forward to a more perfect accomplishment of these words. See chap. lxvi.

V. 6—8. "*A voice saith, Cry!*" &c. The prophet in vision now hears another voice which seems to be addressed to himself, and which commands him to make a proclamation concerning the frailty of man and the imperishable nature of the word of Jehovah. But what is the object and scope of such a command in this place? First, it seems to have been intended for the encouragement of the pious Jews during their sufferings in Babylon. The riches, grandeur, and power of that great city, were unstable and fleeting, like the flower of the field: but the promise of Jehovah would prove unchangeable and eternal. This consideration was calculated to turn away their minds from thinking of their present state of degradation and misery, and to lead them to look forward to the accomplishment of the judgments God had threatened to inflict upon their oppressors.

But we must not rest satisfied with this application of the words. No doubt they have a higher and more general import. I know not that I can give this better than in the language of Bishop Lowth, whose note upon these verses is as follows:

"What is the import of this proclamation? That the people, the flesh, is of a vain temporary nature; that all its glory fadeth, and is soon gone: but that the

word of God endureth for ever. What is this but a plain opposition of the flesh to the spirit; of the carnal Israel, to the spiritual; of the temporal Mosaic economy, to the eternal Christian dispensation? You may be ready to conclude (the prophet may be supposed to say) by this introduction to my discourse, that my commission is only to comfort you with a promise of the restoration of your religion and polity, of Jerusalem, of the temple, &c: these are earthly, temporary, shadowy, fading things, which shall soon pass away, and be destroyed for ever; they are not worthy to engage your attention in comparison of the greater blessings, the spiritual redemption, the eternal inheritance, covered under the veil of the former, which I have it in charge to unfold unto you. The law has only a shadow of good things; the substance is in the gospel. I promise you a restoration of the former; which however, is only for a time, and shall be done away according to God's original appointment: but under that image I give you a view of the latter; which shall never be done away but endure for ever." See 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

V. 9—10. Here the return from Babylon seems to be altogether lost sight of; and the prophet, transported into future times, proceeds to speak in the most sublime language, of the office and character of the long expected Messiah. It is almost impossible to write anything upon such a passage as this, without detracting from its beauty and weakening its energy. There are however some few things that demand the notice of an expositor. First, the substance of the proclamation which Zion, that is, the spiritual Zion, the church of God, more especially ministers of the gospel, are commanded to make. "*Behold your God.*" What can the Arian, what the Socinian, say to this?

When were these words accomplished but at the time when the Apostles of Jesus Christ went through the cities of Judæa declaring that he was Lord of all, and preaching salvation in his name? Can there be any doubt whether the passage under consideration have reference to the Messiah? Is it not the object of the whole prophecy to comfort the Church with the assurance that the promise, made so long before, of a Saviour who should bruise the serpent's head, was about to be accomplished? But what can express more distinctly the divine nature of that Saviour than these words; "*Behold your God?*"

"*With might he cometh,*" &c. These two lines declare the power of the Saviour to subdue his enemies, and to recompense his friends. The former he conquers and rules over by his *might;* for the latter he has prepared an eternal reward, an everlasting recompense. Let us be careful however not to imagine, because the blessedness which Christ promises to his faithful servants is called, *hire* or *wages*, that it is the *merited* reward of their services to him. "The *wages* of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." Rom. v.

V. 11. How beautifully does this image represent the care which our divine Redeemer exercises over every individual member of his church! Like a good shepherd, he will provide for the wants of his people. He will feed them continually with spiritual food—he will graciously assist the weak and feeble, and, as it were, carry them (as the careful shepherd does the tender lambs) in his bosom; and lastly he will suit the dispensations of his providence to the several cases and circumstances of each, not laying more upon them than they are able to bear; as the considerate owner of the flock takes care not to hurry or overdrive the ewes

with young—Compare Gen. xxxiii. 13. Psalm xxiii. John x.

V. 12. The primary design of the following striking contrast between Jehovah and idols, seems to have been to shew the folly and vanity of idolatry; and to encourage the pious Jews in their captivity confidently to hope for deliverance, since he whose perfections are here described in such majestic language, had promised to deliver them in due time, and what could the idols of the heathen do against him? But taken in connexion with the verse immediately preceding, and in a more general sense, is not this whole passage calculated to comfort and encourage the timid, doubting Christian? While in the former place he is led to regard his Saviour as the "good shepherd," is he not here taught to recognize him as infinite in wisdom, knowledge, and power? No one, I think, can doubt for a moment that he who is spoken of as a shepherd in the 11th verse, is he who is described as the creator of all things immediately afterwards. How otherwise can any connexion be made out between the two verses? The prophet having represented the Saviour in the endearing character of a Shepherd, next speaks of his almighty power, to teach us that he not only loves his people and *wills* their happiness, but is also able to insure it.

"*Who hath measured the waters*," &c. How grand; how sublime are these ideas! To think of a being capable of measuring the waters of the ocean in the hollow of his hand, and of spanning the whole compass of the heavens!—How insignificant do the mightiest of men appear in comparison.

V. 13, 14. The *power* of Jehovah is the subject of the former verse, his *wisdom and knowledge* of these. All the knowledge and wisdom possessed by men or

angels, is derived; but that which is in Jehovah is his own; essential to his nature, and possessed by him from all eternity. What folly then and presumption is it in man to find fault with any of the works or words of God, as though they were unwise or unjust, when the very powers we possess of knowing, reasoning, and judging, are derived from him? "Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, *Why*," &c. chap. xxix. 16.

V. 15. "*As a drop in the bucket*," &c. i. e. As the drop which remains in the bucket, or the small particles of dust which adhere to the scales. This would imply, that the earth and its inhabitants are nothing more in comparison with the whole creation of God, than a drop of water, or a particle of dust, is in comparison with the whole mass to which they belong. From this, and many other similar passages, we may infer, that the sacred writers were not ignorant, as some have imagined, of the immensity of God's works. Their ideas of this immensity appear fully to have come up to the well-known illustration of modern philosophers, that if the whole solar system were annihilated it would scarcely be missed. For would a drop of water be missed from a whole bucket full? The former may be the more sublime illustration of the two; but the latter is the most familiar and tangible.

V. 16. How clearly does such a passage as this, and the parallel one in Micah vi. 6, 7, shew the necessity of some better atonement for sin than the blood of bulls and of goats. For if no sacrifices of this description, however great, would be of any avail in taking away the guilt of sin, why were they appointed by God himself? Undoubtedly to this end, that the Jewish church might have continually before their eyes a

visible representation of the true sacrifice for sin,—*the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.*

V. 17. "*As nothing.*" That is, as to their power to do anything without his permission, not as to their value in his sight. On the contrary, we are taught that God's care of his creatures is such, that *not a sparrow can fall to the ground without him.* Matt. xviii. 29.

V. 19. It seems to me to add much to the beauty of this verse, to read it as an interrogation. As if the prophet had said; If Jehovah be such as I have described him, can you suppose that an image made by man can assist in forming your ideas concerning him, or in exciting your devotion? Yet this latter is the only argument employed in favour of their practice by the *thinking* advocates for image worship: the fallacy of which is most apparent. For since *visible representations* of the Divine Being must always hinder rather than help our forming right conceptions of his nature, they cannot assist devotion; true devotion being founded upon correct ideas of the divine nature and character. See Deut. iv. 14—18. We may therefore confidently affirm, that the worship of images of any description cannot be justified, either upon rational or scriptural principles.

V 20. "Even the poor man, who cannot afford an oblation to Jehovah, on account of his poverty, yet thinks he can make a god, if not of gold or silver, yet of wood." This seems to be the emphasis of the passage.

V. 21. Thus the apostle declares, that "*the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead,*" are clearly seen in the works of creation; (Rom. i.) according to the words of the Psalmist, *The heavens declare the glory of God,* &c. Psalm xix. Or these

words may be particularly addressed to the Jews who had been taught from the beginning who was the Creator of the world and all things in it.

V. 23, 24. This is said with particular reference to the princes and rulers of Babylon, who thought they had crushed the people of God for ever when they carried them away captive from their native land. But Jehovah "blew on them," and they were brought to nothing. And what weakness of faith does it shew to doubt for a moment that such will be the end, ultimately, of all the enemies and opposers of true religion.

V. 26. Let it be remembered, that the grand object of this prophecy is to *comfort the people of God* under affliction, by setting forth the majesty and power as well as the mercy and goodness of Jehovah. Here, therefore, the prophet directs them to contemplate the grandeur of the starry heavens; and reminds them that their God was the Creator of them all. Could he then want power to save them? See chap. li. 6.

V. 27, 28. Jacob and Israel frequently signify in the mystical language of prophecy, the true church; and sometimes Christ himself, the head of the church, is called by the latter name; as in Hosea xi. "When Israel was a child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." In which place, the evangelist tells us, Christ is spoken of; of whose going down into Egypt when a child, the sojourning of the children of Israel in that country, in the infancy of their existence as a people, was a type. Compare Matt. ii. 15. We may consider these words, therefore, as addressed to the church in general, although intended primarily to encourage and console the Jewish church in the time of her afflictions. Could she suppose, that *her way was hid from Jehovah*, &c. i. e. that he did not know the

sufferings she endured, or that knowing them he took no notice of them? Had he not promised ever to watch over his church, and was he a man, that he should grow weary and fail of his word?

V. 29—31. God does not promise that those who love and serve him shall not be afflicted; but that he will support them under their trials, and never allow them to be so tempted by sufferings as to be altogether cast down in despair. When the just measure of chastisement has been inflicted, he removes his hand, and restores to them the light of his countenance, and their spiritual strength is renewed.

"*Their wings shall spring afresh like the eagle's.*" All birds in the moulting season are weak and sickly, but when they have regained their feathers they soon recover their strength and vivacity. This is particularly true of the eagle, which is one of the longest lived of birds, and although remarkably weak when casting its feathers, is said immediately afterwards to resume its wonted vigour, and being thus annually renewed, to continue strong and active to the last year of its life, which is sometimes protracted beyond a hundred years. How beautiful an emblem then is this of the renewed strength which is imparted to those who *wait upon Jehovah*, after they have been in affliction? (Compare Psalm ciii. 5.) Does it not indicate, that however they may be *cast down*, yet shall they not be *destroyed*?

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XL.

(1) Heb. *To the heart of Jerusalem.*—i. e. in a comfortable strain.

(2) Both the metre and the sense seem to me to favour this connection of the words, rather than that of our translation, which makes the second חנוּת the beginning of another sentence.

(3) מסכן.—*Poor man.* This translation is justified by the use of the word Eccles. iv. 13. ix. 15. It seems to be derived from סכן, a steward or treasurer; one who manages and dispenses the provisions of a family. Hence it may signify, *to be in such circumstances as require good management; to be poor.*—Taylor's Concordance, Vol. ii. p. 1255.

(4) Heb. *And I shall be equal.* The meaning is, To what will ye liken me, so that after you have compared us together, I shall find myself upon an equality with your representative?

(5) "*My cause is unheeded,*" literally, *my judgment passeth away from my God;* but as this is not an English phrase, and of ambiguous meaning, I thought it better to give the sense of the passage rather than a strict verbal rendering.

(6) כשול יכשלו.—*To stumble they stumble, or to fall they fall;* which means they so fall that they cannot get up again.

SECT. 37. CHAP. XLI.

THIS chapter contains a grand dramatical representation, like that in chap. i. of a contest between Jehovah, and idols and their worshippers. All people are called upon to be judges of the contest, the issue of which is put upon the power to foretel future events. Jehovah predicts the victories of Cyrus, and the deliverance of the Jews by his means; and appeals to these prophecies as the evidence of his divinity: while the vanity and impotency of idols is manifested by their inability either to say any thing or to do any thing. Such is a general outline of the contents of this chapter, in which, however, are mingled besides many encouraging and consolatory addresses to the church.

ISAIAH: Sect. 37. Chap. XLI. 1—7.

1. Be silent, O islands, before me, and let the people ([1]) collect their strength;
   Let them draw near, then let them speak; let us come together to the trial.
2. Who raiseth up one in righteousness ([2]) from the east, calleth him to his foot,
   Giveth nations before him, and maketh him ruler over kings?
   Maketh them as dust to his sword, as the driven stubble to his bow?
3. He pursueth them; he passeth on; he shall not come ([3]) with his feet in the way of peace.—
4. Who hath wrought and done it, calling future generations from the beginning?
   I, Jehovah, the first and the last, even I am he.
5. The islands have seen it and are afraid;
   The ends of the earth tremble, draw near, and come together.
6. Each one helpeth his neighbour; and saith to his brother, Be strong.
7. So the carpenter encourageth the refiner of metals,

And the polisher, him that beateth with the hammer, saying;
It is ready for the sodering;—And then he fasteneth it with nails that it be not moved.

8. But thou Israel art my servant, thou Jacob whom I have chosen;
9. The seed of Abraham my friend, whom I have strengthened.
From the ends of the earth, and from the boundaries thereof, have I called thee,
And have said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and will not deny thee.
10. Fear not, for I am with thee;
Be not dismayed, for I am thy God:
I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee,
Yea I will uphold thee with my faithful right hand.
11. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded;
They shall be as nothing; yea the men that contend against thee shall perish.
12. Thou shalt seek, but shalt not find them, the men that strove with thee;
They shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought, even the men that fought against thee.
13. For I Jehovah thy God am he that strengtheneth thy right hand,
That saith unto thee, Fear not, I am thy helper.—
14. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, ye men of Israel;

I am thy helper, saith Jehovah, and thy redeemer,
the Holy One of Israel.

15. Behold, I have made thee as a new sharp (4)
threshing instrument with teeth,
Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and bruise
them, and shalt make the hills as chaff;
16. Thou shalt winnow them, and a wind shall
carry them away, and a whirlwind scatter
them.
But thou shalt rejoice in Jehovah, and glory in
the Holy One of Israel.
17. The poor and needy seek water and there is
none, their tongue is parched with thirst;
I Jehovah will answer them, I the God of Israel
will not forsake them:
18. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains
in the midst of the vallies;
I will make the desert a pool of water, and the
parched land flowing springs:
19. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the
acacia, and the myrtle and the oil tree;
I will set in the desert the fir tree, the pine, and
the box tree together:
20. That they may see, and know, and consider, and
understand together:
That the hand of Jehovah hath done this, and
the Holy One of Israel hath formed it.
21. Draw near, open your cause, saith Jehovah:
Bring nigh your mighty ones, saith the king
of Jacob.

22. Bring them nigh, and let them declare unto us
what shall come to pass;
Declare the first things what they are,
That we may apply our heart, and know their
end;—
Or tell us the things that shall come to pass a
long time hence;
23. Declare unto us things to come hereafter, and
then we shall know that ye are gods:
Yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be as-
tonished and dismayed together.
24. Behold ye are nothing, and your work less than
nothing;
He that chooseth you is an abomination.
25. I raise one up from the north, and he shall
come,
From the rising of the sun he shall call upon my
name,
And he shall come upon princes as mortar,
And as the potter treadeth clay shall he tread
them down.
26. Who hath declared this from the beginning, that
we might know it?
And before it happened that we might say, it is
true?
Surely there is none that declareth, none that
maketh known,
Surely there is none that heareth your words.
27. At (5) the first, to Zion said I, Behold, behold
them!

And to Jerusalem give I the messenger of glad tidings.

28. I looked, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor,
Who when I inquired of them could return a word.

29. Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing;
Mere breath and emptiness are their images.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XLI. 1—3.

V. 1. Jehovah, about to speak, calls upon the islands or remote parts of the earth, to listen to his words with silent awe and attention. At the same time he bids the idolaters also *collect their strength,* that is, their idols, and draw near, that after he had spoken they might answer, and the hearers then determine which was indeed God.

V. 2, 3. The idol gods and their worshippers being assembled as to plead and hear a cause in a court of justice; Jehovah proceeds to vindicate his divinity. These two verses must be understood as prophetical, Jehovah declaring that he was about to raise up some great person from the East, who should conquer the enemies of his people, and set them free. But who was this person? Some commentators, and among them is Bp. Lowth, say Abraham; others Cyrus. That Cyrus, and not Abraham, is intended, seems to me very clear. The scope of the whole chapter is against the latter supposition. For the object of Jehovah is, by predicting future events which would be known to the world, to confound idols, and manifest his infinite knowledge and power. But the calling of Abraham had taken place many hundred years before Isaiah's time, and although an event of great importance to the Church, and well known to the Jewish nation, was scarcely, if at all, known to the Babylonians and other

Gentiles, who are here principally addressed:—What proof then would it be to them of the divinity of Jehovah? Further, what is said of this person is not true of Abraham, but describes exactly the things effected by Cyrus. For how could it be said of Abraham that, *nations were given before him, and that he ruled over kings?* To suppose this means nothing more than such a victory as he obtained over the five kings of Canaan, who were in fact nothing more than the heads of five small tribes, is most unsatisfactory.

On the contrary, all that is here stated is perfectly true of Cyrus who, as every one acquainted with ancient history knows, subdued several kings more powerful than himself, and took possession of their kingdoms. And what is most remarkable, if we may give any credit to Xenophon as an historian, the immense armies of these kings made scarcely any resistance, but fled at once before him, as is here expressed, "like dust before the wind." See Cyropædia, B. vii. Lastly, the parallel passages in which Cyrus is spoken of by name, are so exactly similar to this, as to leave no doubt that the same person is meant.—Compare chap. xlv. 1. xlvi. 11.

The only objection of any weight that can be urged against this interpretation, is the epithet given in our translation to the subject of the prophecy, "*the righteous man.*" With what propriety could Cyrus, an idolater, be called "*righteous?*" I answer, supposing the authorized version to be correct, which is doubtful, the word righteousness, when applied to a heathen, may mean nothing more than justice or equity, for which virtues Cyrus was particularly noted. It seems to me however, more probable that the expression should be translated and understood in the same manner as chap. xlv. 13, and then it will mean that God was

about to raise up Cyrus *justly* to be the vindicator of his people. *From the East.* Cyrus came from Persia, which lay to the East both of Judæa and Babylon. "*He shall not come with his feet in the way of peace.*" Meaning, probably, that he would never be obliged to sue for peace with his enemies, but would be always conqueror, as was indeed the case.

V. 4. "*Calling future generations,*" &c. That is to say, knowing, determining, and, in some cases, naming, the particular nations and individuals who shall exist from the beginning to the end of the world. Nothing is more wonderful and incomprehensible to us than this attribute of Jehovah; but we must believe of God many things we cannot comprehend.

"*The first and the last.*" The true import of these expressive epithets seems to be, that as God is the great *first* cause of all things, so also are all things created for his glory, and will eventually contribute to make his perfections known. He is *the first*, the originating cause; and *the last*, the end or object. We ought not to forget that our Lord speaks of himself in precisely the same terms, Rev. i. 7. xxii. 13. Compare Col. i. 16.

V. 5—7. These verses describe the supposed consternation of the Babylonians, and other idolaters, at the report of Cyrus's victories. Fearful of the result, they are represented as paying peculiar honours to their idols, whose formation is depicted in a manner calculated to set them in a contemptible light.

V. 8, 9. The victories of Cyrus would be the destruction of idolaters; but Israel, the church of God, need not fear. Jehovah had chosen Abraham and his posterity to be his peculiar servants; and although he might suffer them to be afflicted and oppressed, they would not be destroyed.

"*Abraham, my friend.*" This is certainly the highest title that ever was conferred upon a mortal. It implies, that Abraham, by divine grace, was made like to God, (for there can be no friendship without a similarity of moral qualities,) and admitted to the most familiar communion with him. James ii. 23.

V. 10—13. These words, no doubt, were addressed primarily to the literal Israel, captive in Babylon, and were intended to assure them of the destruction of their enemies, and of their own preservation. But may not every believer take the promises contained in them to himself? Who can doubt that they were intended for the strengthening and consolation of the church to the end of the world?

V. 14. "*Thou worm Jacob.*" Every part of the word of God is calculated to humble the pride of man and make him appear little in his own eyes. "*Thou worm Jacob.*" What a humiliating, and yet encouraging epithet is this? It is as if God had said to his church, "Thou art indeed feeble and helpless in thyself, as a worm, and as contemptible, in the eyes of the world; yet thou need'st not fear,—in my eyes art thou precious, and I will help thee, and redeem thee from the power of thine enemies."

V. 15, 16. The church is here compared to a threshing instrument, and a winnowing machine; with the former the corn was beaten out from the ear, and with the latter it was separated from the chaff. By these emblems God assures his people of their final triumph over all their enemies. I know not of any particular event to which this prediction can be referred. It seems to intimate generally the gradual overthrow, by the instrumentality of the church, of all false religions and their upholders, who are compared

to *mountains* and *hills*, which mean therefore idolatrous princes and governments.

V. 17—20. Although the final triumph of the church was declared to be certain, yet is it here intimated, that it would be preceded by severe suffering and distress, in which however God promises to send relief. "*The poor and needy seek water*," &c. As if it had been written; "My people, poor in spirit, and sensible of their need of my help, seek for the aid of the Holy Spirit to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort them; nor shall they seek in vain: *for I Jehovah will answer them*," &c. The Gentiles seem here to be especially intended; indeed these verses may be considered as prophetical of their conversion. For what can the causing a plentiful supply of water in places where we should least look for it mean, but the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon that mystical desert, the heathen world; the consequence of which would be the springing up among them of true believers, adorned with all the graces of the Spirit, and who are therefore compared to trees of the greatest beauty and most odoriferous scent?

"*That they may see and know*," &c. Here the reason why God had predicted these things is assigned. It was, that men, before ignorant of him, might see and know, by the accomplishment of these prophecies, that he, by whose inspiration they were uttered, is the only true God.

V. 21—24. Jehovah, having proved his divinity by the prediction of future events; and having, as it were by the way, addressed his people in terms of consolation, now turns to the idolaters supposed to be assembled before him, and calls upon them to bring forth their idols, that they in their turn might speak

and foretel something, either *the first things*, those that were about to take place immediately, or more distant events, which would not happen for a long time: or, if they confessed themselves unable to do either of these, to shew by the performance of some action, either good or evil, that they at least possessed some power. But, in answer to this appeal, the idols can neither say nor do any thing, and are therefore pronounced vain and unprofitable.

"*An abomination;*" i. e. Abominable in the sight of Jehovah, to whom nothing is more offensive than idolatry.

V. 25. Again Jehovah repeats his prediction concerning Cyrus, and his victories over the kings of the earth, and appeals to this prediction as the sure evidence of his Godhead.

"*From the north—the rising of the sun.*" Although Cyrus was by birth a Persian, and, consequently, the land of his nativity lay directly east of Babylon, he was sent at an early age to the court of his uncle Astyages, king of Media, which country lay to the north-east of Babylon; and it was from thence he marched with his army against the Chaldæans. Every reader must from hence perceive with what propriety the expressions here employed are applied to him. But did Cyrus *call upon the name of Jehovah?* Was he not an idolater; or rather, like the rest of the Persians, a worshipper of fire—as the proper emblem of the Supreme Being? Here indeed is an apparent difficulty, which however is, I think, satisfactorily solved by a reference to the proclamation of Cyrus, Ezra i. 2, which is to this effect; "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia. The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and *he* hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah."

From this it is evident, that if Cyrus did not entirely renounce the gods of his country, he acknowledged Jehovah to be superior to them all, and may with truth therefore be said to have called upon his name. It is however not at all improbable, that Cyrus went still further, and, that these prophecies of Isaiah having been shewn to him upon the taking of Babylon he was really converted to the true religion. This conjecture is greatly strengthened by a very remarkable passage in Herodotus, quoted by Vitringa; the words are addressed to Hystaspes, and are to the following effect: 'The gods take peculiar care of me, and shew me beforehand all things that shall come to pass.'[1]

V. 26. The idols being again challenged respecting their knowledge of the great events referred to, remain silent and confounded; they say nothing, they know nothing; no one hears their words.

V. 27. Jehovah was he who predicted the coming of Cyrus, long before he was born, and the deliverance of the Jews from captivity by his means. There seems to be an evident reference here to chap. xl. 9.

V. 28, 29. These verses conclude the contest. Jehovah looks around upon the people and their idols supposed to be assembled before him, to see if they had anything to answer; any reply to make to his inquiries and arguments. But they are still silent; and are therefore again pronounced vain and unprofitable.

[1] Εμεν θεοι κηδονται, και μοι παντα προδεικνυσι τα επιφερομενα. L. I. c. 209.

REMARKS.

There are two subjects treated of in this chapter which seem to claim particular attention, namely; the folly and sin of idolatry; and the safety of the church of God. With regard to the first, that idolatry is exceedingly absurd and foolish, all will readily admit; but perhaps the *sinfulness* of it may not, to some, be so apparent. Many persons seem to think that it is almost a matter of indifference whether men worship the deity as an *invisible spiritual* being, or under the form of an *image*, so that they worship him at all. The language of the 'Universal Prayer,' as it is called, of one of our first poets, accords with the sentiments of thousands;

> 'Father of all, in every age,
> In every clime ador'd,
> By saint, by savage, and by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.'

As if the worship of the Jew, the heathen, and the Christian, were all alike, and equally acceptable. But God who "knows what is in man," sees differently. He has declared that idolatry is not merely foolish, but wicked. That the worshippers of idols, so far from being regarded by him in a favourable light, are *an abomination* in his sight. And the reason of this is apparent. True holiness and virtue can exist only where there is a right knowledge, and just ideas of the nature and attributes of the Divine Being; but these idolatory does not admit of; it degrades the object of worship, and has therefore ever been accompanied with cruelty, sensuality, and every hateful passion.—See Rom. i. 18—32.

As to the other subject, the safety of the church; we learn from verses 8, 9, 10, upon what that safety is

founded. It depends upon the *choice*, the *calling*, and the *support* of Jehovah. His church he declares is *selected* and *chosen* by him, from the rest of mankind, *called* from every part of the world, and *strengthened* and *upheld* by his faithful right hand. Therefore it can never be destroyed; the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. But does this apply to individual members of the church? Can they take these promises to themselves? Undoubtedly they may. For, if the church, as a body, be safe under the protection of Jehovah, every member *really* belonging to it must be safe also. Let us then only be careful to make "our calling and election sure:" (2 Peter i. 10.) or in other words, to satisfy ourselves upon good grounds that we are indeed called and chosen by God; and then we may rest upon the encouraging promise of his infallible word; "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; I will help thee; I will uphold thee with my faithful right hand."

CRITICAL NOTES.

(1) The Hebrew is, "*renew their strength*," that is, *collect it afresh*, as a man does who resumes the combat after having ceased from it for awhile through fatigue. The verb is used in the same sense, Job xiv. 7.

(2) צדק "*In righteousness.*" This translation is justified by the use of the word chap. xlv. 13, where the ב is prefixed.

(3) The meaning of this clause is doubtful. One M.S. has בשלום Thus Bishop Lowth would read it. His translation is:

'He passeth in safety,
By a way never trodden before with his feet.'

But if this were the sense would it be יבוא in the future?

(4) חרוץ is both a substantive and an adjective. It may here mean either a different sort of instrument from מורג, or it may signify the quality of that instrument. Compare chap. xxviii. 26.

בעל פיפיות means, possessor of points or edges: i. e. whose teeth are not worn out by use.

(5) "ראשון לציון" This sentence is eliptical and therefore obscure. We must understand אמר, or some such word, after ציון, and then the sense is clear.

SECT. 38. CHAP. XLII.

IT may admit of doubt whether this and the following chapter form a distinct prophecy by themselves, or whether they are a continuation of the preceding. This however is not a question of much moment. In either case, the general import will be the same. If we adopt the latter hypothesis, which seems the most probable, we must suppose Jehovah to continue his address to idolaters and their idols, and having predicted the restoration of his people the Jews to their native land, after having been taken captive in Babylon, now to foretel a still greater and more excellent deliverance, which should concern not the Jews only, but the world at large. The contents of this chapter are; 1st. The character, office, and person of Messiah, 1—8. 2ndly. An exhortation to the Gentiles to praise Jehovah, 9—12. 3rdly. A prediction of the destruction of idolatry and of the prevalence of true religion, 13—17. 4thly. Severe reproofs addressed to the Jewish people generally, in which their sins are assigned as the cause of the judgments that were about to be inflicted upon them.

ISAIAH, Sect. 38, Chap. XLII. 1—6.

1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect
   in whom my soul delighteth;
   Upon him have I put my spirit; he shall bring
   forth a righteous law (1) to the Gentiles.
2. He shall not cry aloud, nor lift up his voice, nor
   cause it to be heard without.
3. A bruised reed shall he not break, nor quench
   the smoking flax;
   To the people (2) shall he bring forth a righteous
   law.
4. He shall not become dim, (3) nor be broken,
   until he have set up on the earth
   A righteous law, and in his law shall the distant
   nations trust.
5. Thus saith the God, Jehovah,
   He that created the heavens and stretched them
   out,
   That spread forth the earth, and produced that
   which cometh out of it;
   Who giveth breath to the people upon it, and
   spirit to them that walk on it:
6. I Jehovah have called thee in righteousness,
   And will hold thee by thine hand and preserve
   thee,

And will give thee for a surety (4) to the people,
a light to the Gentiles;
7. To open the blind eyes, to bring forth the
prisoners from prison,
Those who dwell in darkness from the dungeon.
8. I am Jehovah, that is my name,
And my glory I will not give to another, nor my
praise to carved images.
9. Behold, the first things are come to pass, new
things do I now make known;
Before they spring forth, I make you to hear
them.—
10. Sing unto Jehovah a new song, his praise from
the end of the earth;
Ye that go down to the sea, and all that filleth it,
The distant parts of the earth, and those who
dwell in them:
11. Let the desert and its cities lift up the voice, the
villages that Kedar inhabiteth:
Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them
shout from the top of the mountains:
12. Let them ascribe glory to Jehovah, and declare
his praise in the distant lands.
13. Jehovah will go forth like a mighty man, like a
warrior shall he awaken zeal;
He will cry, yea he will shout; he shall prevail
over his enemies.
14. I have long kept silence; I have been still and
restrained myself;
Now will I cry out (5) like a travailing woman,
I will lay waste and empty at once:

15. I will make the mountains and hills desolate, and dry up all their grass ;
And I will make the rivers dry land, and dry up the pools.
16. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not ;
In paths which they had not known will I lead them ;
I will make darkness light before them, and the crooked ways straight :
These things will I do for them, and will not forsake them.
17. They draw back, they are utterly confounded who trust in the carved image,
That say to the molten idols ; Ye are our gods !
18. Hear, ye deaf ; and look, ye blind, that ye may see :
19. Who is so blind as my servant, and deaf as he to whom I send (6) my messengers ?
Who is so blind as he that is perfectly instructed ? (7) and deaf (8) as the servant of Jehovah ?
20. Who seest (9) many things, but givest no heed to them ;
Who openest thine ears, and yet hearest not.
21. Jehovah took pleasure in him, (10) because of his righteousness,
Because he magnified the law, and honoured it.
22. But this is a people robbed and spoiled ;
He hath taken (11) all their youth, and they lie hid in dungeons ;
They are become a prey, and there is no deliverer ;
For a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

23. Who from among you will give ear to this?
Who will hearken and obey for the time to come?
24. Who gave up Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers?
Did not Jehovah, he against whom we have sinned?
In whose ways they would not walk, whose law they would not obey?
25. Therefore hath he poured upon him the fire of his wrath, and the terror ([12]) of war;
And it kindled a flame round about him, yet he understood not;
And it burned him, but he laid it not to heart.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XLII. 1—4.

V. 1—4. THE manner in which this chapter commences rather favours the hypothesis that it is a continuation of the preceding. The eternal Father having demonstrated the vanity of idols, now, as it were, presents his Son to the assembled people, as the only true and sufficient Saviour, saying; "Behold my servant," &c. Every sentence in these verses demands our attentive consideration. That Christ is the subject no one can doubt: for to whom else can the things predicated be applied? We have also the authority of St. Matthew for making the application, chap. xii. 17. Let us now then examine each clause separately.

"*Behold my servant.*" Here is what perplexes and confounds the natural wise man. The Messiah is called a servant,—how then can he be equal with God? It does indeed seem hard to comprehend how he, who in this and other places is called a servant, should be one with Jehovah. But does not St. Paul solve the difficulty in the passage in the Philippians already referred to, where he tells us; "*He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant;*" Phil. ii. 5. The Son of God, then, is called a servant, because he undertook the *obligations* of a servant. As man, he acted not for himself, but as the minister of his Father; and he therefore professed himself ready to do and to suffer whatever rebellious

men, whom he represented, might be required to do and to suffer. Had he not been a servant how could he thus have been our representative? Hence he says, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John vi. 38.

"*Whom I uphold.*" If we regard the Son of God as having now taken upon him the form of a servant, we shall have no difficulty in understanding the meaning of this expression. In his human nature, the eternal Son, like the rest of mankind, was dependant upon his heavenly Father for support and strength in the work he had to do; and he expressed this dependance by praying to him like one of us. Compare John viii. 29.

"*Mine elect.*" Christ is called the elect of the Father, because he was chosen and appointed by him from eternity to accomplish his purposes of mercy. Eph. i. 4.

"*In whom my soul delighteth.*" Still the Father speaks with reference to the humanity of the Son. As God viewed with complacency all the works he had created and made at the first, so did he regard with peculiar satisfaction *the man Christ Jesus*; knowing that he was perfectly furnished for the work he had undertaken. Accordingly, when the divine Redeemer was baptized in Jordan, there came a voice from heaven, saying; "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii.

"*I have put my Spirit upon him.*" At the baptism of Christ the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon him. It is said also, "The Father gave not the Spirit by measure unto him." John iii. 34. These references sufficiently explain the meaning of this clause.

"*A righteous law.*" Such seems to be the import of the word translated in our Bibles *judgment*. It

signifies, I conceive, the terms or means of man's salvation; or, in other words, the whole Gospel as taught and proclaimed by Christ and his apostles. This may be called "*a righteous law*," both because it shews what true righteousness or holiness is, and because it reveals the manner in which we may become righteous before God. Thus St. Paul calls the gospel, *the law of faith*, and *the law of righteousness*. Rom. iii. 27. ix. 31. That this law was proclaimed to the Gentiles every one knows; it is in fact the Christian religion which we profess.

"*He shall not cry aloud*," &c. The manner in which St. Matthew has applied this passage, affords us a clue to its true meaning. He tells us, that Jesus having healed great multitudes, "charged them that they should not make him known; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet," &c. chap. xii. 17. The general import, therefore, of this verse is, that the Messiah, when he came, would teach the people in a mild and gentle manner; without contention and noise, and without disturbing the peace of the state by exciting popular tumults and seditions. There seems to be an allusion to the manner in which fanatics and demagogues deliver their harangues to the deluded multitudes; their object being by impassioned declamations, and virulent abuse of others, to make themselves popular. Nothing could be further removed from any thing of the kind than our Lord's method of teaching.

"*A bruised reed shall he not break*," &c. Few readers will require any explanation of this clause: at least, every one who has been in any degree taught by the Holy Spirit will know, by happy experience, that "*the bruised reed*" is the humble and contrite heart, which Jesus, instead of utterly breaking, will rather

bind up and strengthen; and that "*the smoking flax*," or half-extinguished wick, is an emblem of faith, hope, and love in an incipient state, which the compassionate Saviour of sinners, so far from despising and extinguishing because they are small, will rather blow into a flame, which shall burn brighter and brighter until the earthern vessel that contains it be worn out.

"*He shall not become dim*," &c. The prophet having in the preceding verse employed the metaphor of a light and of a reed, has them still in his mind, and with reference to these emblems, predicts the duration and gradual increase of Messiah's kingdom. As he will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed, so neither will he himself grow dim, nor be broken, until he have established the law of the gospel upon the earth.

"*And in his law*," &c. An evident prediction this that the Gentiles would receive the law of the Messiah rather than the Jews.

V. 6, 7. Here the Father addresses the Son himself, as a servant chosen and dedicated to perform a great and arduous undertaking. He had called him *in righteousness*; that is, for a righteous purpose; or, to manifest the righteousness of God, and would strengthen and support him to the end.

"*A surety to the people*," &c. A sure pledge, that is to say, of the certainty of the fulfilment of my covenant with my people. As in former times the victim which was slain at the ratification of a covenant, was a pledge on the behalf of both the parties covenanting that they would fulfil their engagements; so was Christ when offered up upon the cross, a sure pledge on God's part, that he would fulfil his promises: Heb. ix. 16, 17.

"*A light to the Gentiles,*" &c. Compare chap. lx. 3. Acts xxvi. 18.

V. 8. "*I am Jehovah,*" &c. Much is implied in this solemn declaration. Philosophers say it matters not under what title we worship the Deity. But "the God" declares that his name is JEHOVAH, neither will he allow that glory and praise which are due to him to be given to gods of another name. Why then do we call him God or Lord, and not Jehovah? Because these words when used by us, always mean him who revealed himself in former times by the name of Jehovah. But the same cannot be said of the worshippers of Jupiter, or Vishnoo, who pay divine homage to beings of their own imagination, and of a very different character from that of the true God. It is, however, in my opinion, to be regretted that the word *Lord* should have been substituted for Jehovah in our Bibles, the latter being much more distinctively the appellation of the true God than the former.

This verse, which may seem at first sight to have no immediate connection with the subject of the preceding, implies that although Jehovah had permitted idolatry and false religion to prevail for a long time, it would not be always so: he would ere long, make known his glory to all people. See Acts xvii. 30.

V. 9. *The former things,* are probably the deliverance from Babylon and its consequences, which is supposed already to have taken place; the *new things* seem to signify the advent of Messiah, and the blessings of the gospel dispensation; of which the prophet, by inspiration of the Spirit, had already said something, and was about to speak much more at large.

V. 10—12. These verses are addressed to the Gentiles now supposed to be converted to the true religion, and contain a general exhortation to wor-

ship and praise Jehovah, in opposition to their former idols.

"*Kedar*" was the name given to one of the sons of Ishmael, whose posterity inherited what we now call the Arabian Desert, the inhabitants of which dwell in tents and go by the name of Bedouins, or wandering Arabs.

"*Inhabitant of the rock.* Meaning the capital city of the Nabatæan Arabs, according to Vitringa.

V. 13, 14. The words of St. Paul, Acts xvii. 30, already quoted, throw light upon this passage. Jehovah had indeed suffered Satan to rule over the understandings and affections of mankind, and to lead them into the practice of idolatry, and foolish superstitions. But he had fixed a limit to these things, and he was about to deliver mankind from that thraldom in which they were held. The destruction of idolatry seems to be especially intended. At the coming of Christ upon earth this work was begun. At his word devils came forth from the bodies of men; and he communicated the same power to his apostles. From the time he began to preach, idolatry and polytheism declined, and in less than four hundred years they were banished from the Roman empire. This destruction of false religion is represented as resembling the conquests of a victorious warrior.

"*Will he awaken zeal.*" He will enter upon the contest with the ardour and zeal of a warrior entering into the battle.

"*He will shout.*" Alluding to the general practice of soldiers in former times of shouting when they rushed upon the enemy.

"*Like a travailing woman.*" Sometimes a metaphor is applicable only in part. Here the *loudness* of the cry, not the pain attending it, is meant.

V. 15. This language is undoubtedly metaphorical. The *mountains and hills* signify idolatrous kings or

kingdoms. *Grass, rivers, and pools,* the rites and doctrines by which idolatry is maintained and upheld in them. Hence the meaning is, that Jehovah was about to destroy the sources of idolatry, by imparting to mankind a pure religion, before which all false religions would wither and fall.

V. 16. Upon comparing this verse with the sixth, it seems very evident that the Gentiles are the principal subjects of it. They knew not the way of peace and eternal happiness. They knew not the nature of Jehovah nor how to worship him. Upon these momentous points all was with them darkness and perplexity. But Jehovah here promises to enlighten their understandings, to instruct their ignorance, and to remove their difficulties.

V. 17. "*They draw back,*" &c. As a man at the sight of sudden danger, draws back, and is struck with fear; so the abettors of idolatry are described as being astonished and confounded at the progress of true religion in the world. The conduct of Demetrius and his companions recorded in Acts xix. affords a good illustration of this verse.

V. 18—20. Here the prophet, in the name of Jehovah, again addresses his own people, and sharply reproves them for their stupidity and ignorance. Although God had sent his messengers to reprove and instruct them; although they had witnessed so many wonderful displays of his love and power; although they had seen the numerous and astonishing miracles of Christ (for God speaks of things future as if they had actually taken place); they still continued deaf to his calls, and spiritually blind. So much so, that with reference to the nature of real religion, they were as dark and ignorant as the heathen themselves.—Compare John ix. 59.

V. 21, 22. The prophet now proceeds to shew why Jehovah had determined to cast off and punish the people he had once so highly favoured. He formerly *took pleasure in them because of their righteousness,* that is to say, their comparative righteousness in the days of David, and in the former part of Solomon's reign; when, as a nation, *they magnified the law of Jehovah, and honoured it,* paying at least an external regard to its precepts and its requirements. But now, because of their sins, he had ceased to regard them with an eye of favour, and would give them up into the hands of their enemies. No one particular judgment seems to be intended, but the prophet rather refers generally to all the evils that were about to come upon the people.

Such appears to me to be the true meaning of this passage, which in the original is obscure, and in our translation hardly intelligible. Should it be objected that Moses expressly affirms that Jehovah did *not* bring the Israelites into the land of Canaan, because of their righteousness, and that the above interpretation seems to countenance the merit of good works: I reply, that although it is undoubtedly true that God did not choose the Israelites because of their own righteousness, yet their remaining in the land of Canaan, and the continuance of his favour, depended entirely upon their magnifying and honouring the law, in obeying which their righteousness consisted. See Deut. xxviii. 9, 10, 63. The interpretation therefore I have given of verse 21, is in perfect accordance with other statements of scripture. With regard to its establishing the merit of good works, whoever carefully considers the subject will see that such is by no means a necessary inference from the passage when viewed in the above light. Is not holiness essential to the character of a believer? Has not our Lord said; "If any man will do the will

of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." John vii. 17. Has he not said; "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him," &c. John xiv. 23. Yet does the Christian infer from hence that his obedience *merits* the promised blessings? No; he knows that his good works are the fruits of the Spirit; the evidences of the reality of his religion; and that he cannot be saved by them, but only through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Titus iii.—Compare chap. i. throughout.

V. 23. These words imply that the majority of the nation would still continue incorrigible, and deaf to the warnings of the prophets. As the expression, "Who hath believed our report?" implies that few would believe it.

V. 24, 25. Here the prophet declares that Jehovah had given up his people Israel to be spoiled by their enemies on account of their disregard to his law; as in verse 21, he had said, he took pleasure in them because of their righteousness.

"*And it kindled a flame,*" &c. Or in other words, the anger of God against them was manifest, yet they paid no regard to his judgments; neither turned to him with their hearts.

REMARKS.

The grand subjects of this chapter are the person, ministry, and work of the Son of God. There are indeed many lesser objects well deserving our regard, but our eyes should be chiefly directed to him. How excellent and beautiful a model for his imitation has the minister of the Gospel set before him in the character of our divine Redeemer as drawn in the

first four verses? Let it be the aim of us all to instruct sinners, after his example, in the spirit of meekness, tenderness, and love; and with a perseverance not to be discouraged either by persecution, contempt, or repeated failures. Like him, let us say to the humble and contrite penitent, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Like him, when we see men obstinately bent upon sin, let us weep over them and intreat them. And should they not only refuse to hear us, but hate and persecute us, let us, still treading in the steps of our adored Master, intercede on their behalf, and say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XLII.

(1) משפט Bishop Lowth justly remarks, that this word, like צדקה is taken in a great latitude of signification. It means rule, form, order, model, plan; rule of right, or of religion; an ordinance, institution; judicial process, trial, sentence, &c. It certainly means in this place, he adds, the law to be published by Messiah; the institution of the gospel.

(2) לאמת "*to the people.*" So Gen. xxv. 16. Numb. xxv. 15. All translators, misled perhaps by the Septuagint, render the passage something in the same manner as in our English Bibles. "*He shall bring forth judgment unto truth:*"—but have these words any clear meaning?

(3) "*Become dim.*" So, undoubtedly, יכהה should be rendered in this place, to correspond with כהה in the former verse, translated smoking, or burning dimly; for the language is figurative, and the Saviour is here spoken of as a lamp or light which was to enlighten the world.

(4) The word ברית signifies both a covenant and the token or sign of a covenant. See Gen. xvii. 13; where circumcision is called God's *covenant*, in the flesh of Abraham and his household. I have therefore rendered it in this place *surety*.

(5) אפעה This word occurs no where else as a verb, and the meaning is therefore doubtful. However, connected as it is with יולדה it must have something of the signification usually assigned to it. The Septuagint translate it by *ἐκαρτέρησα*.

(6) This sentence is eliptical; the elipsis may be thus supplied; כחו לאשר מלאכי

(7) משלם This title seems to have been given to the people of Israel because they were thoroughly instructed in all things relating to religion. For the root signifies, *to finish*, or *complete*. Thus the Mahometans call themselves *Musulmans*, from *salam*, to be safe, entire, sound.

(8) For ועור *and blind*, we must read וחרש *and deaf*: *κωφος*, *Symmachus*; and so MS. Bishop Lowth.

(9) Instead of ראית רבות Secker and Lowth propose to read ראית ראות "*Thou hast seen indeed.*" But this reading is not supported by the authority of a single MS. and is therefore, I think, scarcely admissible, especially as the Septuagint translation is πλεονακις. The marginal reading, in almost all MSS. is ראות instead of ראית and many have it so in the text. It is probably the true one.

(10) It is impossible to make any clear connected sense of the authorized version in this place. We have only to supply בו *in him*, after חפץ and the meaning becomes plain.

(11) *He hath caught in a snare.*

(12) עזוז The *force* or *violence* of war; but terror is the more appropriate word with us.

SECT. 39. CHAP. XLIII.

THIS chapter contains a continuation of the preceding, and is intended principally for the consolation and encouragement of the true Israel. Jehovah assures his people of his unchangeable love and continual support in the sharpest trials, 1, 2; reminds them of what he had done for them in former times, 3, 4; and promises to bring together the members of his Church from all parts of the earth, 5—7. He then addresses the Apostate Jews, and makes nearly the same appeal to them as in chap. xli. 21. 8—13; again assures his Church of their return from Babylon, and at the same time intimates the conversion of the Gentiles, 14—20; lastly, he shews that the Jewish Church had justly deserved the judgments which were about to be inflicted upon it, on account of its many transgressions. Thus throughout the chapter there is a mixture of reproof to the wicked, and of consolation for the righteous, but the latter greatly preponderates.

ISAIAH, Sect. 39. Chap. XLIII. 1—5.

1. Yet now thus saith Jehovah,
   Who created thee, O Jacob, who formed thee, O Israel;
   Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;
   I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.
2. When thou shalt pass through the waters, I will be with thee;
   And when thou art in the rivers they shall not overwhelm thee;
   When thou walkest amongst the fire thou shalt not be burnt;
   And the flame shall not kindle upon thee.
3. For I Jehovah am thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Saviour;
   I have given Egypt for thy ransom, Cush and Seba in thy stead:
4. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honoured, and I have loved thee;
   And I have given men instead of thee, and people for thy life.
5. Fear not, for I am with thee;
   I will bring thy seed from the east, and from the west will I gather thee;

6. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back:
   Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the end of the earth.
7. Every one that is called by my name, whom I have created for my glory;
   Whom I have formed, yea, whom I have made.
8. Bring forth the blind people with eyes, (1) and the deaf that have ears;
9. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled.
   Who among them can declare this, and tell us the first things?
   Let them produce their witnesses that they may be justified;
   And that men may hear, and may say, It is true.
10. Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen;
    That ye may know, and believe me, and understand, that I am he;
    Before me was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.
11. I, I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Saviour;
12. I have declared, and saved, and made it known, and no strange god among you;
    And ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, that I am God.
13. Yea, before (2) time, I am he, and there is none can deliver out of my hand;

I will work, and who shall undo it?

14. Thus saith Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel;
For your sakes have I sent to Babylon,
And have brought down all their strong bars (3)
And the Chaldeans, whose shout of joy (4) is in their ships.

15. I am Jehovah, your Holy One,
The creator of Israel, your king.

16. Thus saith Jehovah, who maketh a way in the sea,
And a path in the mighty waters:

17. Who brought forth chariot and horse, the army and the strong;
Together they lay down, they rose no more;
They became extinct, they were put out like a lamp. (5)

18. Remember not the former things, neither consider what has been done of old;

19. Behold, I do a new thing, now shall it spring forth: will ye not acknowledge it?
I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert:

20. The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the ostriches;
For I put water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert,
That I may give drink unto my people, my chosen;

21. This people that I have formed to myself, who shall shew forth my praise.

22. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob,
For thou art become weary of me, O Israel ;
23. Thou hast not brought unto me the lamb of thy burnt offering,
Neither with thy sacrifices hast thou honoured me ;
I have not caused thee to serve with a meat offering,
Nor have I wearied thee with asking incense :
24. Thou hast not purchased for me the sweet cane,
Nor hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices ;
Yea rather thou hast made me to serve with thy sins,
Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.
25. I, even I, am he, who blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake,
Neither will I remember thy sins any more.
26. Put me in remembrance ; let us now plead together,
Declare thou thy cause, that thou mayest be justified.
27. Thy chief father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me ;
28. Therefore have I profaned the princes of the sanctuary,
And have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproach.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XLIII. 1, 2.

V. 1, 2. JEHOVAH here continues the discourse. In a limited sense the promises contained in these verses may be addressed to the Jews as a nation. Although Jehovah would give them up to be punished by their enemies, yet would he not utterly forsake them. In the midst of their severest trials he would still be with them; and so far strengthen and support them that they should not be overwhelmed. The particular period in the history of the Jewish church to which these promises have reference, is, no doubt, the time of the captivity in Babylon, when the visible church of God did almost literally pass through *fire and water*, with little hope, humanly speaking, of being saved. The case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, (Dan. iii.) may be adduced as an example of the fulfilment of the promise to individuals. It would, however, be taking a very confined view of the word of God to restrict the promise here given to that or any other definite time of persecution and trouble. Rather let us regard it as a general promise made to the true church, the spiritual Israel, as long as the world shall endure. And O, how full of consolation and encouragement must these words prove to the suffering Christian! They do not lead us to expect exemption from afflictions, but they promise support under them. It is not said, *Thou shalt* NOT *pass through the waters*, but, WHEN *thou*

shalt pass, &c. And is not this enough? If we are sure *that all things shall work together for good to them that love God;*[1] and that *he will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able;*[2] and therefore that the *end* is certain; shall we desire to be exempted from those chastisements which a merciful Father sees fit to send upon us, and which, perhaps, are absolutely necessary in order to our attaining that end?

V. 3. "*I gave Egypt,*" &c. Jehovah encourages his people to trust in him in future from the experience of his power and readiness to help them on former occasions. *He gave Egypt for their ransom,* &c.; either when he destroyed Pharaoh and his host for their preservation; or rather, when he gave up the Egyptians, together with the Ethiopians and Sabeans, (see chap. xx.) to the army of Sennacherib, instead of allowing it to destroy Jerusalem. Vitringa shews, that a nation or individual is said, in the language of scripture, to be given in ransom for another, when by suffering anything, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, it saves that other from suffering. As in Prov. xxi. 18, it is said; "*The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous.*" The general sense, therefore, of this passage is, that as God had formerly permitted other nations to be smitten rather than that his people should be destroyed; so he would also punish the Babylonians, that they might be saved. The application of the encouragement contained in this declaration to the Christian church is obvious.

V. 4. From the time that Jehovah had chosen the family of Jacob to be the *nursery*, if I may so express myself, of his church, he had glorified them in the sight of other nations by many remarkable deliverances, and

[1] Rom. viii. 28. [2] 1 Cor. x. 13.

had given up many people to death for their preservation. Witness the plagues of Egypt, the destruction of the Midianites, of the Assyrians, &c.

V. 5—7. "*I will bring thy seed,*" &c. Is this promise given to the literal or spiritual Israel? Or, in other words, Are the Jews, as a nation, the subjects of it, or is it addressed to the invisible church, composed of Gentiles as well as Jews? The expressions in the seventh verse, "*Whom I have formed,*" &c. incline me to the latter opinion. It seems to me that this is rather a promise to the *church* than to the Jewish people; a prediction of its enlargement by the bringing in of Gentile converts from the ends of the earth, rather than of the restoration of the Jews. Yet this latter event may be also included. Compare Eph. ii. 10. Let it be observed, that the preservation of the Jewish nation, referred to in the 4th verse, was for the sake, not of the whole body of the people, the carnal and reprobate sons of Jacob,—for what peculiar love could God have for them?—but of the true church, the preservation of which, for a time, depended upon their existence.

"*Every one that is called by my name.*" That is, all my children. To be called by the name of another, means to have the relation of sonship.

V. 8, 9. Here the Lord again directs his discourse to the literal Israel, the hardened unbelieving Jews, and calls upon them and their idols, being assembled together with the Gentiles, to produce prophecies like those they had heard from him. Compare chap. xli. 22.

V. 10—12. The most certain evidence of the divinity of Jehovah is to be derived from the prophecies which he enabled his servants to deliver. These were made known, in part, to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews;

and they formed the constant study of believers. Ye are my witnesses, therefore, saith Jehovah, ye Jews and Gentiles, and you my chosen people, that I both foretold what should happen and have executed my purposes.

V. 14. This verse, in which God speaks of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus as if it had already taken place, declares that that event was brought about by him in order that his people might be delivered from their captivity. From whence we may draw the general inference that all the affairs of this world are so ordered that they may conduce to the welfare of the church.

"*Whose shout of joy is in their ships.*" Meaning that they abounded in ships, and exulted in them.

V. 16, 17. Here is an evident allusion to the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and the destruction of the Egyptians on that occasion.

V. 18—21. Two great events, the one being the type and earnest of the other, are predicted in these verses, viz. the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and the communication of the blessings of the gospel to the Gentiles, accompanied, necessarily, with their deliverance from idolatry and superstition. When God delivered his people from Babylon he manifested his power on their behalf a second time, and thus wrought for them a *new thing*; and, as the route from Babylon to Judæa lay through a desert, in speaking of this deliverance he promises to remove all obstacles that could obstruct their return, by providing water, restraining the wild beasts from injuring them, &c. Compare chap. xl. 3 : xlix. 18.

But although this may be considered as one sense of the prophecy, undoubtedly it has another, and more important meaning. The *wilderness* and the *desert*,

signify heathen countries;—*the beasts of the field, dragons, &c.* their idolatrous inhabitants;—water and *rivers*, the Holy Spirit. Viewing the passage in this light, we have here a promise that Jehovah would make *a way* for the knowledge of himself among the Gentiles, by pouring out upon them the influences of his Holy Spirit, and thus that they, who were before utterly ignorant of him, should honour him and shew forth his praise.

"*This people that I have formed.*" Compare verse 7.

V. 22—24. Here again Jehovah addresses his people in the language of expostulation, and shews how justly they had deserved punishment, and that if mercy were yet to be extended to them, it would not be on account of any merit in themselves. But how shall we reconcile this statement with that contained in chap. i. 11? Here Jehovah complains that his people had neglected to offer to him the sacrifices required by the law; "*Thou hast not brought unto me the lamb of thy burnt offering,*" &c. There, on the contrary, he says, "I *am satiated with the burnt offerings of rams,*" &c. To reconcile this apparent contradiction, we must remember that Jehovah speaks in the passage we are considering rather with reference to the *disposition of mind* with which the sacrifices were brought, than to the sacrifices themselves. When he says, therefore, "*Thou hast not brought unto me the lamb,*" &c. He does not mean that they had actually ceased from offering him any sacrifices, but that they omitted many required by the law, and that those they did bring were presented in such a manner, so unwillingly and grudgingly, and accompanied with so much sin in the worshippers, that he could not consider himself honoured by them. Or, if this explanation be

thought unsatisfactory, we must suppose two different periods are referred to; and that the expostulation in the first chapter was addressed to the Jews at a period when the external worship of God was observed, but the people were notwithstanding grossly wicked and immoral; while this refers to their state under Ahaz, and in the beginning of Manasseh's reign, when the services of the temple were neglected altogether.

"*I have not caused thee to serve,*" &c. Thus Jer. vii. 22. "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices." The declaration in both places is clearly to be understood, not absolutely, that Jehovah had *not* given the Israelites any precepts concerning sacrifices, and other ceremonial observances; but restrictedly, that he had not given them as in themselves sufficient to insure their salvation, or as if the observance of them was to constitute the chief thing in religion.

V. 25. Supposing these words to be addressed to the Jewish church, we may consider them as a promise that Jehovah would yet shew favour to his people, and bring them back from Babylon; for as their captivity was in consequence of their sins, the promise that their *transgressions should be blotted out,* implies also a promise of restoration to their own land. But this was only a temporary remission. The people soon returned to their sins and God's wrath was again poured out upon them. Not so is it with the remission promised to the spiritual Israel. That is an eternal remission. And it is therefore only to the invisible church that these words can be applied in an unrestricted sense.

V. 26. As if unwilling hastily to pass sentence

upon them, Jehovah calls upon his people to remind him of any righteous acts they had done, and thus to plead their own cause and shew on what grounds they could reasonably hope to escape punishment.

V. 27. So far from being able to plead as a body that they were innocent, their *chief Father*, the High Priest himself, had grievously sinned, and those who professed to be their instructers in religion had transgressed against Jehovah. Vitringa thinks there is a particular allusion to Urijah, the High Priest in the reign of Ahaz, who, by the direction of that impious king, made an altar at Jerusalem like one at Damascus, and offered daily sacrifices upon it. Most interpreters explain the words, *thy first and chief Father*, as if they referred to Adam. But he was not peculiarly the first Father of the Jews more than of any other people; this interpretation, consequently, deprives the passage of all emphasis.

"*The princes of the Sanctuary.*" Meaning, the High Priests and the other ministers of the Temple service, whom God *profaned* when he permitted them to be carried away captive by idolaters.

REMARKS.

It is almost unnecessary to make any remarks upon the contents of this chapter, the subject matter of which is nearly the same as that of the preceding. The love of God to his people, the freeness of grace, and the certainty of its continued supply to the believer are here clearly intimated. For if Jehovah said to the Jewish church, "Fear not, when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," &c.; much more does he address this language to every member of his beloved Son. Yet let us beware of considering and handling this subject in the spirit of controversy. Men may dispute all their lives about the doctrines of free grace, and final perseverance, without the smallest profit either to themselves or others. It is indeed to be feared that many loud and eager disputants of this class, will be found wanting in the essential characteristics of God's people at the last. The humble Christian will shrink from such controversies. He knows that he has nothing in himself, and all in his Saviour. However, therefore, he may distrust his own strength, and his power to keep himself, he will go on his way rejoicing, confident in the support of his Almighty helper and Redeemer.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XLIII.

(1) "*With eyes.*" Literally, *and there are eyes to them.* לחם is understood.

(2) מיום To make this sentence complete ראשון, or some such word, must be supplied. *Earlier than the day, I am he,* &c.; that is, I am the same God who existed before there was day and night. Gen. i. 5.

(3) *Their strong bars.* Compare chap. xlv. 2.

(4) רנה is an equivocal word, and may mean either the shout of war, the song of exultation and joy, or the cry of distress. It is not easy to say which of these significations ought to be assigned to it here.

(5) "*A lamp.*" It is clear that פשתה both here and in chap. xlii. 3, means something that was employed to give light; probably a torch, or the wick of a lamp, either of which might be composed of tow or flax, and on that account be so called.

(6) *Thy chief father.* To shew that this title may, consistently with the general style of scripture, be applied to the High Priest, Vitringa refers to the following places: Judges xvii. 10. xviii. 19. 2 Kings ii. 12.

SECT. 40. CHAP. XLIV.

IN the conclusion of the preceding section Jehovah had addressed the Jewish church at large, and denounced judgments upon it, assigning, at the same time, the reason of those judgments; he now speaks to the true church, the spiritual Israel, and consoles them with the promise of a great increase by the addition of Gentile converts, and of a plentiful effusion of the Spirit, verses 1—5; then follows an animated and striking appeal to idolaters, which contains the finest exhibition of the absurdity of idolatry that was ever written, verses 6—20; after which Jehovah affectionately addresses his people, and reminds them of the excellency of their state compared with that of idolaters, verses 21, 22; promises them redemption from captivity in Babylon, and expressly mentions by name the instrument of their deliverance, verses 23—28.

ISAIAH: SECT. 40. CHAP. XLIV. 1—7.

1. But now hear, Jacob my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen;
   Thus saith Jehovah, who made thee, and fashioned thee from the womb; thy helper; ([1])
2. Fear not, my servant Jacob, and Jeshurun, whom I have chosen:
3. For I will pour water upon the thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground;
   I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring:
4. And they shall spring up among the dry grass, as willows by the water courses.
5. This shall say, I am Jehovah's, and this shall be called ([2]) by the name of Jacob;
   And a third shall sign himself as Jehovah's, and shall be surnamed by the name of Israel.
6. Thus saith Jehovah, king of Israel, and his redeemer, Jehovah, God of Hosts;
   I am first, and I am last, and besides me there is no God.
7. And who, as I, proclaimeth, and maketh known, and ordereth it, ([3])
   Since I appointed the people of an eternal duration?

Let them make known to them (4) future things
that have not yet come to pass.

8. Fear not, neither be ye terrified;
Have I not told thee long ago, and revealed it
unto thee?
And ye are my witnesses that there is no (5) God
beside me;
Neither is there any rock; I know not any.

9. They who form a carved image are all of them
vanity,
And the things in which they delight, shall not
profit;
And as for their idols, (6) they see not,
They understand not, therefore shall they be
confounded.

10. Who hath formed a god, and molten an image
to no profit?

11. Behold all that join themselves to him, shall be
ashamed;
For as to the workmen themselves they are
of men;
Let them be gathered together all of them, let
them stand up,
Let them be confounded and ashamed together.

12. The worker in iron maketh the hatchet, (7)
And he worketh it in the coals, and shapeth it
with hammers,
Yea, he worketh it with the strength of his
arm;
He is also hungry, and hath no strength;
He drinketh no water, and becometh faint.

13. The worker in wood stretcheth out the line, and draweth it with chalk,
He cutteth it out with axes, and shapeth it with the compass,
And maketh it in the form of a man,
According to the beauty of a human being,
That it may remain in the house.
14. He cutteth down for himself cedars, he taketh the cypress and the oak,
And layeth by good store of the trees of the forest.
He planteth an ash, and the rain maketh it grow;
15. And it shall be for a man to burn, and he will take of it (9) and warm himself;
Yea, he setteth it on fire, and baketh bread:
He also formeth of it a god, and boweth down to it;
He maketh it into an image, and worshippeth it;
16. Part of it he burneth in the fire,
With part of it he prepareth flesh to eat,
He roasteth meat, and his hunger is satisfied;
Yea, he warmeth himself and saith,
Ah, I am warm, I have seen the fire:
17. And the remainder he maketh into a god, even an image;
He boweth down to it, and worshippeth it;
And he prayeth unto it, and saith,
Deliver me, for thou art my god.
18. They know not, they discern not;

For their eyes hath he restrained ([10]) from
seeing, and their heart from understanding.
19. And he considereth not in his heart,
Neither hath he knowledge or understanding
to say;
Part thereof have I burnt in the fire,
Yea also I have baked bread upon its ashes,
I have roasted meat, and have eaten;
And shall I make the residue an abomination?
Shall I bow myself down to the trunk of a tree?
20. He feedeth on ashes; his heart is deluded;
He hath turned aside, and he cannot deliver his
soul,
Neither can he say, Is there not a lie in my
right hand?
21. Remember these, O Jacob, and Israel, for thou
art my servant;
I have formed thee to be my servant, O Israel,
thou shalt not be forgotten by me.
22. I have dispelled ([11]) thy transgressions as a mist,
and thy sins as a cloud;
Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.
23. Sing, O heavens, for Jehovah hath done it,
Shout aloud, ye lower parts of the earth;
Break forth into singing, O ye mountains,
The forest, and all the trees that are in it;
For Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob,
And hath made himself glorious in Israel.
24. Thus saith Jehovah, thy redeemer, and that
formed thee from the womb;
I, Jehovah, am the maker of all things,

Who stretched out the heavens alone, and spread
the earth by myself.

25. Who frustrateth the lying signs, and sheweth
the diviners to be senseless,
Who turneth back the wise, and maketh their
knowledge folly;

26. Who confirmeth the word of his servant, and
will accomplish the counsel declared by his
messenger;
Who saith concerning Jerusalem, Thou shalt
be inhabited;
And of the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built;
And of her desolate places, I will restore them.

27. Who saith to the deep, Be thou dry;
Yea, thy rivers will I make dry land.

28. Who saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and
shall accomplish all my pleasure;
Who saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built,
And to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XLIV. 1—3.

V. 1. In these verses, Jacob and Israel are evidently to be understood, not as signifying the lineal descendants of the patriarch, but as titles given to the mystical Israel, the church of the living God. It seems to me at least impossible to explain the promises here given, otherwise than of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit under the Gospel dispensation, and of the enlargement of the church in consequence. Nothing contained in these verses can be shewn to be applicable in any sense to the return from Babylon; or to any other event that has yet taken place, in which the Jews only were concerned.

"*Jeshurun.*" This means, *the upright*, or *holy one.* God gives this title to his church, because all those who compose it are supposed to be upright. Indeed the members of the invisible church are so; but we find that those qualities which belong *necessarily* only to these latter, are frequently, in scripture, attributed to the whole body, or outward and visible church. Thus the Jewish church is called *Jeshurun:* Deut. xxxii. 15. And St. Paul addresses the whole church at Corinth as "*Sanctified in Christ Jesus,*" although we know that many of them were far from being holy.

V. 3. The two expressions employed in this verse to denote the subjects of the promise, viz. *the thirsty* and *the dry ground,* are to be understood of the Gentiles, who, being destitute of the quickening and refreshing

influences of the Spirit, are well compared to ground that is parched and barren from want of rain. See this prophecy first fulfilled : Acts x. 44.

"*Thy seed.*" When the Gentiles were brought into the church of God, they became children of Jacob, and heirs of the blessing promised to him. Compare Rom. ix. 8—24 : Gal. iv. 28.

V. 4. Both Jews and Gentiles, at the time of Christ's first coming, were almost universally ignorant of the nature of real religion, and destitute of its fruits. They are therefore represented as resembling the hard, *dry grass* which is found in hot countries, and is profitable for nothing. But, as willows spring up and flourish in the midst of the dry grass by the side of the water-courses ; so would true believers spring up from amongst both Jews and Gentiles, in consequence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

V. 5. The *readiness*, *boldness*, and *decision* with which the new converts should devote themselves to the service of Jehovah, is here predicted. No longer would they call themselves worshippers of Baal, or Asteroth, or Jupiter, but of the living God. Neither would they hesitate to join themselves to his church, and to be called by the name of his people.

"*Shall sign himself as Jehovah's.*" That is, shall solemnly bind himself to become the servant of Jehovah. There seems to be an allusion to the manner of making contracts amongst the Jews, when probably, as with us, the parties signed their names to the conditions mutually agreed upon.

V. 6—8. Jehovah here again encourages his people under the anticipation of the predicted judgments. He had foretold them, and ordained them, and indeed all other events that had befallen the Israelitish church from the beginning, and he would take care that it

should not be destroyed. The import of this appeal is the same as of that contained in the preceding chapter, v. 10—13. Jehovah is the only God who ever proclaimed his future purposes to mankind, and accomplished his predictions. He therefore alone is truly God.

"*Since I appointed the people of an eternal duration.*" That is, since I called Abraham and his posterity to be to me a peculiar people, that should never be destroyed. Vitringa refers to Gen. xvii. 7, and Jer. xxxi. 36, as confirming this interpretation.

V. 9—20. These verses contain indisputably the finest exposition of the absurdity of idolatry, that ever was written. The beauty and force of the passage are however considerably diminished by the manner in which it is translated in our Bibles. The prophet does not describe, first, the manufacture of idols of metal by the smith, and then of wood by the carpenter, as represented in the authorized version; but, his object being to set the folly of idolatry in the most striking light, he traces the production of idols from the very first, and shews that they are from first to last entirely the work of men's hands. He begins therefore with the manufacture of the *instruments*, with which the idol is to be formed, and describes the labour and exhaustion accompanying the work of the smith, in hammering and shaping the axe. He then proceeds to speak of the second part of the operation, which belongs to the worker in wood, or the carpenter, and gives a lively picture of his share in the formation of the image. Lastly, he shews how the wood itself is produced which is destined, at a future period, to become a god; and to make the absurdity of the practice still more glaring, he finely opposes the different uses for which the same tree is employed; with part

the deluded idolater dresses his food, and warms himself, the remainder he forms into an object of divine worship.

"*Their eyes hath he restrained from seeing*," &c. The best commentary upon these words will be found, Rom. i. 19—25. The apostle there shews that the *unwillingness* of men to retain in their minds the knowledge of the glory and perfections of the invisible God, is the reason why he gives them up to the delusion and folly of idolatry.

"*He feedeth on ashes*." He looks, that is to say, for support and consolation to a thing which is incapable of affording him either. As if a man should attempt to satisfy his hunger by eating ashes. Milton seems to have had this passage in his mind, in his description of the disappointment of the fallen angels and their leader, after the return of the latter from his successful expedition to our world.—'Paradise Lost,' B. x.

"*He hath turned aside*," &c. That is, he hath turned away from the true God, and is consequently become devoid of understanding, and has not power to deliver his soul from the bondage of superstitious folly; nor to discern, that whilst he is worshipping an idol, he is, as it were, holding *a lie in his right hand;* or, in other words, that he is paying divine honour to a thing which cannot but disappoint all his expectations. Nor let the proud free-thinker of our times, who has also turned away from Jehovah, suppose that he is really any wiser than the poor idolater, whose folly he derides. He may have more *intellect;* but this idol which *he* worships will leave him as destitute and helpless in the time of trouble and in the hour of death, as the lifeless image of the idolater leaves its deluded votary.

V. 21, 22. That these words have reference primarily to the Jewish church captive in Babylon, is, I

think, beyond dispute. Yet let us not suppose that they were intended exclusively for the comfort and encouragement of the Jews. Let us rather consider them as addressed to ourselves, and whilst we rejoice in the gracious assurances they contain of free and full remission of sin, let us remember the wretched and helpless condition of those nations who are yet involved in the darkness of idolatry.

"*As a mist,*" &c. Sin is well compared to clouds and mists, because, as they hide the sun from our view, or obscure its light, so does sin hide from us the light of God's countenance, and cause coldness and darkness to the soul. Thus our prophet—

> "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.
> And your sins have hid his face from you." Chap. lix. 2.

V. 23. There is something exceedingly grand and beautiful in these apostrophes to the whole inanimate creation, of which we meet with several in the sacred writings, but not, that I remember, in any others. But if the redemption of the Jews from Babylon, which was merely a temporary benefit and typical of something better, deserved to be thus celebrated; how much more does the redemption of sinners from death and hell call for the united praises of the astonished universe? Yet man, the object of this great work, hears of it without one feeling of gratitude or love!

V. 24—28. The taking of Babylon, the instrument and the method by which it would be effected, the return of the Jews from captivity, and the rebuilding of the temple, are the subjects of these verses, which, together with the following chapter, contain one of the most circumstantial and astonishing prophecies in the Bible.

"*Who frustrateth the lying tokens.*" It was customary for the false prophets, as well as the true ones, to give some sign or token that the predictions they uttered would be fulfilled. Thus we read, 1 Kings xxii. 11, that Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, made horns of iron, and put them upon his head, in token that Ahab would defeat and destroy the Syrians. But this was a *lying token*, for the Syrians were victorious, and Ahab was slain, according to the prediction of Micaiah, the prophet of Jehovah, who thus frustrated the lying token of the false prophet. The allusion here, however, is rather to the impotence and folly of the Chaldean astrologers and soothsayers, which were especially manifested on that memorable night when Belshazzar was suddenly arrested in his sinful mirth by the appearance of a man's hand writing upon the wall the decree of Jehovah, the meaning of which they were unable to explain. Dan. v. 5.

"*Who saith to the deep, Be thou dry.*" The stratagem by which Cyrus entered the apparently impregnable city of Babylon is well known. Having dug a large deep trench near the Euphrates, he turned the water of that river into it; and the river thus becoming fordable, he marched up its bed straight into the city, the inhabitants of which made little or no resistance, being entirely unprepared for such an attack. It is evident, therefore, that by *the deep*, in this place, is meant the Euphrates, which Cyrus diverted from its original channel by the secret influence of Jehovah. The words of the conqueror upon this occasion, as we find them recorded by Xenophon, are remarkable. Having assembled the principal officers of his army, just before he was about to attack the city, 'My friends,' said he, 'the river yields to us its bed, to

make for us a way into the city; let us enter it with confidence,' &c.[1]

"*Who saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd.*" Cyrus is called *the shepherd* of Jehovah simply, I imagine, on this ground; because he was the instrument appointed by God to restore the Israelites to their own land: for it is part of the office of a shepherd to bring back sheep that have wandered, to the fold.

REMARKS.

The express mention by name of the individual who was destined to accomplish the purposes of Jehovah with regard to the restoration of his people and the destruction of their enemies, which we meet with in the preceding chapter, is too remarkable a circumstance to be passed over without particular notice. It is utterly incredible that Isaiah should have penned such a prediction as this of his own mind; it must therefore have emanated from him who orders all events in heaven and in earth, and to whom what is, and what has been, and what shall be, is equally well known. The only possible reply that sceptics can make to this argument is, that the prophecy was written after the events which it professes to foretel had taken place. Or, in other words, that Isaiah was not the author of it, but some person who lived at least a hundred and seventy years after his death. But in order to prove this, they must shew that the whole book of Isaiah is a forgery, and was written subsequently to the restoration of the Jews to their native land. For these prophecies respecting Babylon and Cyrus are so inter-

[1] Cyropædia, liber vii.

woven with the rest of the book, that it is impossible to invalidate the genuineness of the one without at the same time denying the authenticity of the whole. Now I would ask the unbeliever, at what period was this book invented, and passed off upon the Jews as containing the writings of Isaiah? Will he say, after the return of the Jews from Babylon? And can any one then really believe, that Ezra, or Nehemiah, or any other of the chief men amongst them, would be able to persuade the people, contrary to the evidence of their senses, that they and their fathers had possessed, all the time of the captivity, and for many years previously, writings which they had never before seen? The supposition carries absurdity upon the face of it. But if Isaiah did actually write the words contained in the 25th verse of this chapter, who can for a moment doubt, as already remarked, that they were dictated to him by the Spirit of God?

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XLIV.

(1) Instead of יעזרך, we ought, I think, to read עזרך, to correspond with the other words in the verse.

(2) יקרא. According to the Masoretic punctuation, this verb is in the present of Kal, but Symmachus, Vitringa, and Lowth read it in Niphal.

(3) The לי here seems to be redundant, and is not found in one M.S.

(4) For למו, unto *them*, Bp. Lowth, after the Chaldee, reads לנו, unto *us*. But the change seems hardly necessary. Jehovah is speaking *of* idols, not *to* them. He says, therefore, "*Let them make known to them*, that is, to those who worship them, *future things*."

(5) חיש אלוה "*Whether there is any God beside me*," &c. So the Septuagint ει εστι θεος πλην εμου. The structure of the sentence however is confused. Literally translated it runs thus; "*And ye are my witnesses: Is there a God beside me? and there is no rock; I know none.*"

(6) *Their idols.* עדיהם. This word plainly answers to וחמודיהם in the preceding line. Now as that signifies, *desirable things*, from וחמד; this, I imagine, means, *pleasant things*, from עדן, and may therefore be fitly rendered by our English word, *idol*, which implies anything very dear. עדניך *thy delightful things*, occurs Psalm xxxvi. 8.

(7) מעצד. This word is found Jer. x. 3, and evidently means an *axe*, or *hatchet*. It has no doubt the same signification in this place. In both instances it is used in describing the manner in which trees are cut down to be made into idols.

(8) לכרת־לו. Strange as it may appear at first sight, I have little doubt that this clause is immediately connected with the beginning of the 12th verse. ל, prefixed to an infinitive signifies, *in order to*, *for the purpose of*; what then does the subject of the words לכרת לו do, in order to *cut down to himself*, &c.? why, He *formeth an axe*.

(9) מהם. *Of them*, literally. That is, the branches.

(10) טח. The precise meaning of this root is, to *smear—to cover over with a thin layer of anything*. Lev. xiv. 42. 1 Chron. xxix. 4.

(11) מחיתי. "*I have wiped away*," or, as in our English Bibles, *I have blotted out*. But the image of *wiping away*, or of *blotting out*, a cloud, is so incongruous, that I have ventured to render this verb by *dispelled*, as being more suitable to our ideas.

SECT. 41. CHAP. XLV.

THIS chapter contains, 1st. A prophetical address to Cyrus, in which Jehovah foretels his conquests, riches, and greatness, and declares the reason why he had announced these things so long before; ver. 1—7. 2ndly. A beautiful figurative prediction of the blessings that would succeed the restoration of the Jews under the gospel dispensation, which prediction is delivered as a command from the Almighty addressed to the heavens, who are bid to shower down *righteousness;* ver. 8. 3rdly. An expostulation with the unbelieving Jews, those who murmured against the divine judgments sent upon the nation, intended to shew the folly and danger of such conduct; ver. 9—12. 4thly. Many encouraging promises to the true church, of enlargement, peace, and eternal salvation; among which is introduced another exposure of the folly of idolaters, in order to contrast the misery of their condition with the happy state of the church; ver. 13—25.

ISAIAH : Sect. 41. Chap. XLV. 1—5.

1. Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus,
   Whom I have supported, holding him by the right hand,
   To subdue nations before him, yea the loins of kings will I unloose ;
   To open before him the double doors, yea the gates shall not be shut.
2. I will walk before thee, and will make the crooked ways straight ;
   The double doors of brass will I break,
   And the bars of iron will I cut asunder ;
3. And I will give thee the treasures hid in darkness,
   And the concealed riches of secret places ;
   That thou mayest know that I Jehovah who call thee by thy name,
   The God of Israel, am God alone. (1)
4. For the sake of Jacob my servant, and of Israel my chosen,
   I have both called thee by name, and surnamed thee, though thou knewest me not.
5. I am Jehovah, and there is no God beside me ;
   I strengthen thee, though thou knowest me not ;

6. That they may know from the rising of the sun,
   And from the west, that there is no God but me;
   I, Jehovah, am God, and there is none other:
7. Who form light, and create darkness,
   Who make peace, and create evil;
   I, Jehovah, am he who doeth all these things.
8. Let the skies gently send down from above, and the clouds pour forth, righteousness;
   Let the earth open, and let salvation and righteousness bear fruit,
   Let it cause (2) them to bud together; I, Jehovah, have created it.
9. Woe to him that contendeth with his Maker,
   To the vessel that striveth with the workman; (3)
   Shall the clay say to the potter, What makest thou?
   Or shall thy work say of thee, He hath no hands?
10. Woe unto him that saith to his father, What begettest thou?
    And to his mother, What dost thou bring forth?
11. Thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, his former;
    Do they demand (4) of me what shall come upon my children?
    And do ye command me concerning the work of my hands?
12. I have made the earth, and created man upon it;

I with my hands have stretched out the heavens,
And have commanded all their host.

13. I will raise him up in righteousness, and direct all his ways,
He shall build my city, and set free my captives,
Not for hire, nor for a ransom,
Saith Jehovah God of Hosts.

14. Thus saith Jehovah;
The treasures (5) of Egypt, and the merchandize of Cush,
Shall pass over to thee, (6) and shall be thine;
And the Sabeans, men of high stature,
Shall walk after thee; in chains shall they pass on;
To thee shall they bow down, and thee shall they supplicate,
Saying, Surely with thee is a god, and there is no other.

15. Truly thou art God, who didst hide thyself,
O thou God of Israel, the Saviour.

16. They are ashamed and confounded, all of them together;
They have withdrawn in confusion, the makers of images.

17. Israel shall be saved by Jehovah with an everlasting salvation;
Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded for ever.—

18. For thus saith Jehovah, who created the heavens;
He, the God, who formed the earth,
He that made it, and established it;

(He created it not to be empty, he formed it to be inhabited,)
I, Jehovah, am God, and there is no other.
19. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth,
I have not said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me, for nought;
I, Jehovah, speak in righteousness, and reveal the truth.
20. Assemble yourselves, and come; draw near together, ye escaped of the Gentiles;
They have no knowledge who carry about a piece of wood, their carved idol,
And make supplication to a god which cannot profit.
21. Expose them, bring them near, yea, let them consult together;
Who hath made known this long before? Hath revealed it from now?
Have not I, Jehovah? Neither is there any God beside me;
Except me is there no God righteous, and able to save.
22. Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth,
For I am God, and there is no other.
23. For by myself have I sworn, the sure word hath gone out of my mouth, and shall not return,
That to me every knee shall bend, every tongue shall swear;

24. Yea, each one shall say, In Jehovah have I
righteousness and strength:
To him shall they come, and all that were in-
censed against him shall be confounded.
25. In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified,
and shall glory.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XLV. 1—5.

V. 1—5. The more we consider this portion of Isaiah's prophecies, the more cause we shall find for admiration and astonishment. A person is here addressed by name who was not yet in existence; and the manner and fruits of his victories are described with the most minute accuracy, in perfect accordance with the records of profane history. A brief account of the principal subject of these verses may not be unacceptable to some of my readers.

Cyrus, one of the most celebrated persons of antiquity, was the son Cambyses, king of Persia, and was born about the year 590, B. C. sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. He is described by Xenophon as remarkable for the beauty of his person, the strength and agility of his body, and the extraordinary qualities of his mind. Surpassing all others in every military exercise, he was at the same time endued with great intellectual powers; and with such sweetness of disposition, and such engaging manners, that he gained the hearts of all with whom he had to do, even of those whose country he had conquered, and rendered tributary to himself. Of all conquerors, indeed, mentioned in ancient history he appears to have been the most free from those vices and extravagances by which the characters of such persons are generally disgraced, and to have been endued by

God with more of those qualifications which are requisite for founding a great empire, than any other. The following extract from Xenophon's introduction to his Cyropædia will shew that the above remarks are not without foundation. Having said that no animal appeared to him, at one time, so difficult to govern as man, he adds; "But, when I consider that Cyrus made himself to be obeyed by so many myriads of men, that he held under his command so many cities, and so many different nations, I am obliged to change my opinion and to acknowledge, that it is not impossible, nor even very difficult, to command men, if a person sets about it in a right way. In fact, people the most distant are known to have come to offer themselves to Cyrus of their own accord, although the greater part of them had never seen him, and some were certain that they never should see him. They wished to be among the number of his subjects at any price. This is the reason why there is no hereditary prince or conqueror, the extent of whose dominion can be compared with his."—Cyropæd. L. 1. § 1.[1]

"*His anointed.*" Cyrus is called the anointed of Jehovah, in much the same sense as the Medes and Persians are called his *sanctified ones*, (chap. xiii. 3.) that is, because he was appointed by Jehovah to accomplish a particular purpose, and endued by him with the requisite qualifications for effecting it.

"*To subdue nations before him,*" &c. This passage

[1] The account which Herodotus gives of the birth, education and character of Cyrus, is very different from the above. But is it reasonable to allow the improbable stories of a writer like Herodotus, who is known to abound in fable, to invalidate the authority of a sensible and sober historian, such as Xenophon, who assures us, that he received all his information from the Persians themselves, during a long residence amongst them?

cannot be better illlustrated than in the words of the historian above quoted. " Cyrus, he observes, having taken the field with a small army of Persians, first drew to himself the Medes and the Hyrcanians, and afterwards subdued the Syrians, the Assyrians, the Arabians, the people of Cappadocia, those of both the Phrygias, the Lydians, the Carians, the Phenicians, and the Babylonians ;—and numberless other provinces the names of which even are scarcely known. He alone governed all these people, and was obeyed by them although they understood not his language, nor each other. The mere terror of his name made all the world bend under his law, nor did any one ever dare to undertake anything against his authority."—Cyrop. L. 1. § 1.

" *The double doors of brass.*" The walls of Babylon contained an hundred gates or folding doors, all of brass. These were left open the night Cyrus attacked the city, no doubt by the especial providence of God, for otherwise he could not have taken it.

" *The treasures hid in darkness.*" The riches which Cyrus acquired by his conquests, must have been immense. For, not to mention others, he obtained possession of all that belonged to Crœsus, king of Lydia, whose wealth was so great, that the riches of any prince of modern times would appear a mere trifle in comparison.—See Cyrop. L. viii. § 3.

V. 6. " *That they may know from the rising of the sun.*" There can be little doubt that the pious Jews would shew these prophecies concerning Cyrus to those Gentile nations amongst whom they were dispersed. Josephus indeed affirms, that they were brought to the notice of Cyrus himself, and that he was principally induced by them to issue his decree in favour of the Jews. Now this edict, being a public document

generally made known throughout the dominions of Cyrus, would doubtless excite the curiosity of all those to whose knowledge it came, and lead them to inquire respecting that God of whom it made mention in such respectful terms. And thus, by means of these predictions, would many from different parts of the earth be convinced that Jehovah alone is God.

V. 7. "*Who form light and create darkness,*" &c. This declaration is levelled particularly against the doctrine of the Persian Magi, who, until their religion was in some measure remodelled by Zoroaster, believed in the existence of two eternal, first principles, the one good and the other evil; the former of which was represented by light, the latter by darkness. The first of these they supposed to be the author of all things tending to man's happiness, such as, health of body, peace of mind, plenteousness &c; to the other they ascribed the origin of all things evil, which cause the miseries of mankind, as war, sickness, &c. In opposition then to these, and similar ideas, Jehovah declares that he is the creator, and supreme ruler, of all things; and consequently that nothing, whether evil or good, can exist *independent* of him, much less can act in opposition to his will. How appropriate this declaration was to the person to whom it was immediately addressed is very obvious. But is God indeed the author of all evil as well as of good? of sin as well as of holiness? Of all questions in theology, this is perhaps the most difficult and perplexing. In writing and speaking upon it many persons seem to forget the main difficulty, which is, *the origin* of evil. That evil exists, we know; but how did it first come? To say that God *permits* it, is saying nothing to the point, for permitting is not originating, and the question is as to the *source* of evil. Nor does it help the difficulty, to

say that Satan is its author. Doubtless the evil there is in our world originated with that fallen spirit; but, how did he himself become evil? Whence arose the first rebellious thought or desire in him, the highest of created beings? Again I say, here is a knot which no human understanding or sagacity can undo: volumes have been written upon it, but it remains as inextricable as ever. And, after all, need we be so anxious to understand this mystery? Does it in any way affect our happiness? Is it not far wiser and better to acknowledge, with the inspired apostle, that God's judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out? Let those then who would consult their own peace, leave these incomprehensible things to be cleared up in another state of existence, when, perhaps, we shall be better capable of understanding them. The allowing the mind to dwell much upon such matters, not only will have the effect of making a man sceptical upon all the essential truths of Christianity, but may lead even to atheism and despair. These remarks are made, therefore, purely with a view to shew the folly of so doing, not as though it were possible they should throw any light upon so intricate a subject.

V. 8. The return of the Jews from Babylon was preparatory to the fulfilment of God's promises with regard to the coming of the Messiah, and the blessings accompanying his advent. The beautiful imagery of this verse undoubtedly refers to these blessings, and not, in any sense, to the privileges conferred upon the Jews by Cyrus, to which they cannot be applied without violence. Jehovah speaks. As by a prophetical command he bids the *skies* and the *clouds*, the former *gently to drop down*, the latter to *pour forth*, not the fertilizing dews, or the refreshing shower, but, what would be far more beneficial to the soul of man than even these

to the earth, *righteousness*, that is, the *doctrine of Christ*, or the great and glorious blessings of the gospel; and having issued his command to the *heavens*, the source of natural and of spiritual good, the same divine word bids the *earth* open her bosom to receive the good prepared for her; or, in other words, the *inhabitants* of the earth to open their hearts for the reception of the quickening, sanctifying gospel of Christ; that *salvation* and *righteousness* might *bud* together, and bring forth *fruit*; i. e. that men might be justified, sanctified, and saved. The same expressive figures are employed by Moses and Hosea, Deut. xxxii. 2. Hosea ii. 21—23. The latter passage very nearly resembles this of Isaiah, and may serve to illustrate it. "It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens; and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel." Here the subject is evidently the same as that of the passage we are considering. But there is this difference between the two prophets; that Isaiah represents the salvation and righteousness as the fruits of Jehovah's *command*, Hosea describes them as the effects of the church's *prayers*. Jezreel, *the seed of God*, is supposed to pray for the increase of true religion, or of faith, righteousness, and salvation, figuratively, *corn* and *wine*; these hear the prayers of the church, and call upon mankind to receive them; men listen to their invitation, and seek for grace from the heavens; the heavens attend, and desire permission from Jehovah to shower down the sought-for blessings; and Jehovah hears and assents. Thus Hosea's metaphor is in a manner an inversion of Isaiah's.

V. 9, 10. This expostulation is intended for the rebellious, unbelieving Jews. These, no doubt, would murmur because God had permitted them to be carried

away captive to Babylon, and distrust his promises of deliverance. But in so doing they would act as if the clay should pretend to understand the design of the potter better than he himself, and would only bring down upon their heads heavier judgments. Such seems to be the primary application of the passage; it may, however, be taken in a much larger sense, and be applied generally to all those who presume to call in question the equity of the divine government, or the justice of the dispensations of God towards his creatures. See Notes chap. xxix. 16.

V. 11. The folly of those who dared to doubt the goodness and justice of God's dealings is here further shewn. Did they think that they were authorized to *demand* of him what providential dispensations he should send upon his children? Or will ye, asks the eternal Creator, *command* me how I am to act towards the work of my hands? Will ye, my creatures, give directions to your Creator? Let Christians learn here an useful lesson.—Are we not all too ready to suppose that we know better than God himself what is good for us?

V. 13. "*I will raise him up,*" &c.; i. e. I, the same God who created the heavens and the earth, will raise up Cyrus to be the just avenger of my people. I will prosper him in all his undertakings; and he shall cause my city to be rebuilt.

"*Not for hire,*" &c. It was not because he expected to reap any advantage from it, but purely because he believed God had commanded him, that Cyrus issued his decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Compare Ezra i. 1.

V. 14, 15. When the phrase, *Thus saith Jehovah,* comes in between two parts of a prophecy, it is intended, if I am not mistaken, to call particular attention

to what follows, and is often introductory to a new subject. In this place it seems to be employed with a view to carry our thoughts from the deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus, to the conversion of the Gentiles under the gospel dispensation. The language is clearly figurative, and implies, that the riches of the wealthiest and most powerful nations should be consecrated to the service of the church; and the people themselves, constrained by the influences of the Spirit, acknowledge and worship the true God. The prophecy may have had a partial accomplishment in the conversion of some few from amongst the different people mentioned, after the return of the Jews from Babylon, but it certainly relates chiefly to the promulgation of the Gospel among the Gentiles. See Psalm lxxii. 9—11.

"*Sabæans, men of high stature.*" 'That the Sabæans were of a more majestic appearance than common, is particularly remarked by Agatharchides, an ancient Greek historian quoted by Bochart. Phaleg. xi. 26.' Bishop Lowth.

"*Saying, Surely with thee is God,*" &c. In these words the Gentile converts declare the God of Israel, or of the church, to be God alone; and, addressing Jehovah himself, acknowledge him to be the true God, who in former ages had not revealed himself to them. This accords with St. Paul's address to the Lystrians, when they were about to do sacrifice to himself and Barnabas; "Sirs, said he, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God,—*who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own way.*" Acts xiv. 13. See also chap. xvii. 30.

V. 16. The effects produced by the promulgation of the Gospel, seem to be here alluded to. Then

eternal Trinity, that all mankind shall acknowledge him to be "Lord of all created things," to the glory of God the Father. And further, that the whole church, the spiritual Israel, shall ever acknowledge, that justification and holiness, and all the other blessings of the Gospel, are derived to them from Christ their Covenant Head and Redeemer. Compare Philip. iii. 7.

"*Every tongue shall swear.*" See note upon chap. xix. 18.

REMARKS.

The subjects treated of in the foregoing prophecy are various and important. The exact accordance of the prediction respecting Cyrus, contained in the first seven verses, with historical facts, is an indisputable evidence of its divine inspiration, and in this point of view it is deserving the serious attention and consideration of the wavering and sceptical; and may also very well be employed by the sincere Christian for the purpose of convincing persons of this description of the folly of unbelief. To the established believer the promises and declarations of this chapter are delightful and encouraging. They teach him: That he has a faithful and merciful God to do with, who will not leave his true servants without recompense, but who will give "to them that by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life:" (verse 19) That, whilst all the followers of false religions shall be dismayed and confounded, the church of the living God, to which he belongs, shall remain safe and entire for ever: (verse 17.) That the great and precious privileges of the Gospel; pardon, right-

conscience, and salvation are liberally and freely bestowed upon those who seek them: (verse 8.) Lastly, that all the enemies of Jehovah and his people will surely at length be destroyed, and all the adversaries of the church be put under the feet of the Son of God. (Verse 24.)

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XLV.

(1) "*Am God alone.*" These words seem to be required in order to complete the sense. It was not that Cyrus might know that Jehovah was the God of Israel, as the authorized version would imply, that this prophecy was given, but that he might know that Jehovah was the only true God. If, however, the above addition be thought objectionable, the passage may be translated thus;

"That thou mightest know that it is I, Jehovah,
The God of Israel, who have called thee by thy name."

(2) תצמיח is the third person present feminine of Hiphil; consequently it cannot signify simply, *to spring up*, in a neuter sense, but rather, *to cause to spring up;* therefore I suppose ארץ to be its nominative, not יצדקה because it is the property of the earth to cause what is sown in it to spring up.

(3) The English translation of this passage, "*Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth,*" is altogether unlike the usual manner of the prophet. The woe pronounced in the preceding clause requires a corresponding woe in this, as in the next verse, where the second answers to the first. One MS. omits the י of the second חרש and this is probably the true reading.

(4) The meaning of the original in this place is certainly obscure. Bishop Lowth, following the Septuagint, connects אתיות with יוצר in this manner:

'And he that formeth the things which are to come;
Do ye question me concerning my children?' &c.

But this requires the omission of ו after יוצר which is not authorized by any M. S. And is not the alteration, in fact, unnecessary? There can be no reason against connecting אתיות with שאלוני, and so read, the whole passage may be thus paraphrased. Addressing the church in general, Jehovah asks, "Do they *(the rebellious and discontented)* demand of me what shall come upon my children?" And,

addressing the rebels themselves, "Do ye presume to give me commands respecting the work of my own hands?"

(ᵉ) "יגיע." Literally, *the labour*, &c. Riches, or treasures, are so called, because they are acquired by labour.

(ᵉ) "*Shall pass over to thee.*" It is evident that this refers to the *treasures* and *merchandise*, while the other expression, אחריך ילכו, has reference to the *Sabæans*.—I have therefore transposed the sentences, that the right connection might appear at once.

SECT. 42. CHAP. XLVI. XLVII.

THE subject of these two chapters is one, and they ought not therefore to be separated. The prophecy opens with a prediction of the ignominious treatment the idols of Babylon were about to experience, which are represented as being laden like cattle, and driven into captivity; 1, 2: Jehovah then, addresses his people, and contrasts his power and faithfulness with the impotence of the Babylonian gods, 3, 4: after this follows an expostulation with idolaters, similar to that contained in chap. xl.; 5—7: and the chapter concludes with a repetition of the promise of deliverance from captivity by Cyrus, 8—13.—Chapter xlvii. contains a beautiful and affecting denunciation against the city of Babylon itself, whose desolation is signified by a variety of expressive images.

ISAIAH, Sect. 42. Chap. XLVI. 1—6.

1. Bel stoopeth, ([1]) Nebo kneeleth down;
   Their idols are become as cattle, and great beasts;
   They that bore you are laden with a wearisome burden:
2. They kneel down, they stoop together;
   They cannot throw off the burden,
   And they themselves go into captivity.
3. Listen to me, O house of Jacob,
   And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
   That are borne by me from the birth,
   That are carried by me from the womb;
4. Even to old age I am the same,
   And to hoar hairs, I will bear;
   I have made, and I will carry;
   Yea, I bear, and I cast off.
5. To whom will ye liken me, and we shall be ([2]) equal?
   And to whom will ye compare me, that we may be alike?
6. They that lavishly pour out gold from a bag,
   And weigh the silver in a balance,
   Hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god;

They fall down, yea they worship.
7. They take him upon the shoulder, and bear him about,
And fix him in his place, and he standeth up;
From his position he removeth not:
Yea, one crieth unto him, but he doth not answer,
He saveth him not out of his trouble.
8. Remember this, and be of good courage,
Consider it attentively, O ye transgressors:
9. Remember the former things of old time;
For I am God, and none else,
I am God, and there is none like me:
10. Making known the end, from the beginning,
And from ancient time, what is not yet done:
That saith, My purpose shall stand, and I will do all that pleaseth me;
11. Who call a swift bird from the east,
A man to execute my purpose from a distant land.
I, truly, have spoken, I, surely, will bring it to pass;
I have devised, I also will execute.
12. Hearken to me, ye that are stubborn in heart,
Ye who are far off from righteousness;
13. I have brought near my righteousness, it is not far off;
And my salvation, it tarrieth not;
And I will place salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.

CHAP. XLVII. 1.—Descend, and sit in the dust, O
virgin, daughter of Babylon;
Sit upon the ground, thy throne is not, O
daughter of the Chaldeans;
For they shall no longer call thee tender and
delicate.
2. Take the millstones, and grind corn:
Remove thy veil, (1) unloose the sandals;
Uncover the leg, pass through the rivers:
3. Let thy nakedness be uncovered, and thy shame
be seen;
I will take vengeance, and no man shall interpose.
4. As for our Redeemer, Jehovah God of hosts
is his name,
The holy One of Israel.
5. Sit thou silent, and go into darkness, daughter
of the Chaldeans;
For they shall no longer call thee, Queen of
kingdoms.
6. I was wrath with my people, I defiled mine
inheritance,
And I gave them into thy hand, but thou
shewed'st them no mercy;
Thou hast made thy yoke very heavy to the aged;
7. And thou said'st, I shall be a queen for ever.
Because thou hast not laid these things to heart,
And hast not remembered the latter end;
8. Now therefore hear this, thou voluptuous one,
who dwellest in security;
She who saith in her heart, I am alone, and
there is none other,

I shall not sit a widow, and shall not know loss
of children;
9. But these two shall come upon thee in one day,
in a moment,
Loss of children, and widowhood; suddenly (2)
shall they come upon thee,
Notwithstanding (3) thy many sorceries, and the
strength of thine enchantments.
10. But thou trustedst in thy wickedness, thou
saidst, None seeth me;
Thy wisdom and thy knowledge have made thee
to err,
And thou saidst in thine heart, I am alone, and
there is none other.
11. Therefore shall evil come upon thee, of which
thou knowest not the source,
And trouble shall fall on thee thou canst not
avert; (4)
Yea, desolation shall come upon thee suddenly,
which thou expectest not.
12. Stand now with thy enchantments, and thy
many sorceries,
In which thou hast laboured from thy youth,
Perchance they may profit thee, perchance thou
may'st prevail.
13. Thou art perplexed by the multitude of thy
counsels;
Let them stand up now and save thee from
what (5) is coming upon thee,
They that utter incantations to the heavens, that
regard the stars,

Who prognosticate at the new moons.

14. Behold, they are become as stubble, fire hath burned them,
They shall not deliver their lives from the power of the flame;
It is not fuel for their bread, nor a fire to sit before.

15. Thus shall thy merchants be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured from thy youth;
Each one shall wander his own way, none shall save thee.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XLVI. 1, 2.

V. 1, 2. That Bel and Nebo were the two principal objects of idolatrous worship among the Babylonians, is evident from this passage; but what particular deities they represented is not known, nor are we acquainted with their form. They seem, however, from the manner in which the prophet speaks of them here, to have been made in the likeness of some animal, perhaps of a bull or calf, like the Apis of the Egyptians. Supposing this to have been the case, we shall find that these two verses, while they predict the overthrow of the idols of Babylon, contain the keenest satire upon their want of power to help either themselves or their worshippers. For they are represented as stooping and kneeling down, in the same manner as camels or bullocks stoop down in order to be laden; and as having a heavy burden laid upon them, which they are unable to shake off, and as being thus led away into captivity by their captors. Instead, therefore, of being able to assist their worshippers, they themselves would be driven away like cattle. This may be understood in two senses. The meaning may be, either that the idols, being mounted upon carriages, would be laden with the spoils of the temple to which they belonged; or, that the animals, of which they were the representatives, would be laden and driven away. In either sense the *point* of the satire is the

your gods, says the prophet, are become beasts men!

They that bore you." Meaning the idol gods. *To bear*, in this connexion, signifies to *support, to defend, to provide for;* which is what men expect the being whom they worship will do for them; so that *they that bore you*, is equivalent to, *those upon whom you depend for support and protection.*

"*They cannot throw off the burden;*" i. e. When laden they have no power to extricate *themselves* from the lifeless load that is put upon them. How then can they save *you?*

V. 3, 4. Having predicted the fall of the idols of Babylon, Jehovah now calls upon his people to contrast with their impotency his almighty power and unchanging love. He had borne them *from their birth;* or, in other words, from the time when he first called Abraham, from the midst of his idolatrous connexions, to be his servant; which event was, as it were, the *birth* of the people of Israel. From that period they had been the subjects of his peculiar care: he had preserved them in a time of famine by means of Joseph; he had delivered them from Egyptian bondage; he had led them in safety through the wilderness; and, after having subdued the Canaanites before them, had settled them in the quiet possession of the promised land. Nor would he now forsake them in their *old age.* He was still the same almighty, faithful, and loving God, and would continue to protect and bless them. Let it be observed, however, that this promise is addressed to the *true Israel*, not to the Jewish people at large, for it is repeatedly declared, that as *a nation* they would be cast off. Compare Rom. xi. The application of these words to the case of every individual member of the Christian church is obvious and encouraging.

Surely we may consider them, with humility and thankfulness, as giving us an assurance that the same gracious God who first called us to a knowledge of himself, will continue to "strengthen us with might by his Spirit in the inner man," and enable us to persevere, even to the end. To what purpose are such promises as these recorded, unless they may be so applied? Would not the Christian, indeed, be of all men most miserable, if, believing with the firmest persuasion in the eternity of rewards and punishments in a future state, he were always doubtful whether he should enjoy the one or suffer the other? Only let him remember that God promises, to preserve him from condemnation, by saving him from its cause, that is, sin.

"*I cast off.*" This is added by way of caution. Jehovah can sustain, and will sustain, his people always. Yet he is bound by no necessity. He is not like the dumb idols mentioned in verse 2; he *can* cast off whenever he pleases. See Rom. xi. 21.

V. 5—7. "*To whom then will ye liken me?*" &c. These words are addressed to the Jews. Seeing Jehovah was so unlike the gods of the heathen, would they attempt to represent him by a graven image of silver or gold? Could they suppose, that he who had done such great things for them was no better than a helpless idol? It is not improbable, from the circumstance of Aaron's making a golden calf, as the representative of Jehovah, during Moses' absence in the mount, that even in Isaiah's days some might have pretended to worship him under a visible form, and thus have excused their idolatry.

V. 8, 9. See chap. xliv. 21. "*Remember this,*" &c. God calls upon his people to remember, and to think upon, the unhappy condition of idol worshippers com-

pared with their own; and also the great things he had done for them in former days; that thus the pious among them might be comforted, and the rebellious be ashamed.

V. 11. "*A swift bird from the east.*" Meaning Cyrus, who is so called from the rapidity of his conquests. Xenophon relates, that the standard of Cyrus was an eagle, with extended wings, upon the top of a lance. Cyrop. B. vii. 1.

V. 12, 13. This expostulation seems to be intended, primarily at least, for those Jews who continued *stubborn in heart*, or impenitent and rebellious, notwithstanding the punishments that had been inflicted upon them in their own land and in Babylon. Jehovah addresses them as *far off from righteousness*, because, I conceive, they would not believe his promises of deliverance from captivity, and so *thought* that their restoration to the land of Judæa was *far off*, and perhaps would never take place. For righteousness and salvation, in this place, appear to mean the same thing; viz. deliverance from captivity. This, which was about to be effected, would be the result of Jehovah's justice and faithfulness, and therefore is called his *righteousness*, (compare chap. xlv. 13,) and his *salvation*.

"*Israel my glory.*" Israel here undoubtedly means the church, which is Jehovah's glory, inasmuch as it is the medium of making known his glory, or his attributes and perfections, to the world. See chap. xliii. 7.

Taken in a general sense these verses may be considered as containing a warning and exhortation to all sinners, who, if they will not accept the mercy and salvation proffered them in the gospel, must perish.

CHAP. XLVII

V. 1. In the former chapter the nothingness of the gods of Babylon was shewn, and their end foretold; here the fate of the city itself is predicted. Like a haughty and luxurious princess, seated upon a lofty throne, she was once exalted above all other cities, and ruled over them with cruelty and rigour. But Jehovah bids her descend from her throne, and sit down in the dust, in the attitude of disgrace and of sorrow.

"*Virgin, daughter of Babylon.*" Babylon is styled a virgin, because, previously to its being taken by Cyrus, it had been untouched by foreign enemies.[1]

"*Take the millstones.*" The business of grinding corn among the Jews was performed by two women; one sat on the ground and turned the stone, whilst the other supplied the corn. The same method is practised in the east to this day. It was, however, the employment only of the lowest order of females; see Exod xi. 5. Thus she who sat in state as a queen, is told that she must lay aside her dignity and grandeur, and submit to the vilest offices, like the meanest slave. The contrast is striking and affecting.

"*Remove thy veil,*" &c. To add to her degradation and misery, this great princess, who, to use the words of Moses, "would not have adventured to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness," is represented as reduced to the necessity of exposing her tender and delicate limbs to the inclemency of the weather and the rude gaze of every

[1] Herodotus, L. i. § 191.

idle spectator; and as being compelled, in this wretched condition, to walk barefoot upon the rough ground, and to wade a captive through rivers.[1] It is impossible to imagine any thing more expressive than this imagery; and whoever contrasts the grandeur of ancient Babylon with her present desolate condition, cannot but be struck with the awful manner in which this figurative prediction has been accomplished.

V. 4. Did any one ask, Who it was that should destroy Babylon, and redeem the Jewish captives? The church replies, "Our Redeemer is Jehovah God of Hosts," &c.

V. 6. "*I was wrath with my people*," &c. There is a similar declaration to this in Zech. i. 14, 15. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Sion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction." By comparing these two passages together the meaning of this in our prophet becomes evident. Jehovah made use of the Babylonians as instruments to punish his disobedient people. But they treated them with greater harshness and cruelty than he required; and this, not because the Jews had sinned against God, but because they hated and despised them.

V. 8. "*I shall not sit a widow*," &c. The prophet thus represents Babylon as glorying in its strength, and as if secure from the loss of its inhabitants. Xenophon tells us, that, after Cyrus had begun the blockade, "The inhabitants of the city could not

[1] None but the lowest class of females in eastern countries, ever go uncovered, or travel on foot; those who cannot afford a carriage ride on bullocks, and are completely covered from head to foot with a long shawl.

help laughing at his intention of besieging them, and knowing that they had provisions for more than twenty years, treated the attempt with mockery.' Cyropædia, liber vii. 5.

V. 9. "*In a moment,*" &c. The capture of Babylon, as has been already observed, was sudden and unexpected. The inhabitants were dissolved in mirth and festivity, and had not the smallest anticipation of the design of Cyrus until his army was in the city. Indeed, Herodotus says, that those who lived in the middle were dancing and making merry after the extremities had been taken.[1] See chap. xiii.

V. 12. "*In which thou hast laboured from thy youth.*" The Chaldeans were great astrologers from their first origin. Dean Prideaux says, that they made astronomical observations a few years after the flood. Their Magi, by their skill in astronomy, pretended to predict future events; and to discern lucky and unlucky times, from the motions and positions of the heavenly bodies. They also practised incantations and sorceries, and boasted of being able to interpret dreams and visions; in which if they failed, they were sometimes put to death by order of the prince.[2] The prophet calls upon them, ironically, to stand up, and save their city from destruction. Compare Dan. v. 7.

"*They that utter incantations to the heavens.*" These incantations were certain verses frequently repeated, and accompanied with mysterious rites, by means of which these impostors pretended to call up infernal spirits, or to bring down the celestial influences upon whom they pleased. See Virgil, Ecl. viii. Horace, Epod i. l. 45. Sat. l. i. vii.

[1] Herodotus, liber i. 191.

[2] Prideaux's Connections, vol. i. p. 99, 178. Beloe's Herodotus, vol. i. p. 82.

"*That regard the stars.*" The science of astrology, if it deserve the name, was founded upon the absurd idea, that the events of a person's life are connected, in an inexplicable manner, with the particular aspect of the stars and planets at the moment of his birth, so that, if this were known, his future destiny might be predicted. Hence, when a woman was about to be delivered, they were accustomed to *regard the stars* with the greatest attention, in order that they might be able to prognosticate the fate of the new-born infant.

"*At the new moons.*" From which they prognosticated by their colour and appearance. The Mahometans, to this day, watch for the appearance of the new moon with superstitious anxiety.

V. 14. "*It is not fuel for their bread,*" &c. The meaning is, the judgments predicted, which are compared to a fire, shall not be a fire to profit them in any way, but a fire to burn and consume.

V. 15. "*Thy merchants;*" i. e. the astrologers and others before mentioned.

"*Each one shall wander,*" &c. They shall consult only their own safety, not being able to render thee any help.

REMARKS.

On account of the similarity of the language employed by St. John in predicting the destruction of Rome, the mystical Babylon, to this of Isaiah respecting the literal Babylon, Vitringa, and many other writers, are of opinion that this prophecy also has reference to Rome. But is not such a supposition altogether unfounded? Might we not as well, on the same principle, interpret the prophecies concerning the

destruction of Tyre, Nineveh, and other great cities, in like manner? It seems to me, that thus to see papal Rome in every prediction of the Old Testament, is not only absurd, but hurtful to the cause of truth; for it is making the meaning and accomplishment of all the prophecies arbitrary and uncertain. Instead, then, of seeking for a mystical meaning in those prophecies, where the literal interpretation is satisfactory, and the accomplishment evident, let us rather endeavour to draw from such as the foregoing, those lessons of humility and trust in God which they are calculated to convey. The manner in which the pride and self-confidence of Babylon is spoken of, shews how offensive these are in the sight of God. Nothing indeed is to be more guarded against by the believer than the least approach to that frame of mind which, as if we were independent beings, plans, arranges, and anticipates the results, without reference to him "in whom we live and move and have our being." And what folly is it to do so? How often do we see all the plans and hopes of men, like the mirth of the Babylonians, blasted, withered, and destroyed in a moment? On the other hand, how secure are we of happiness, of peace, and of safety, if we live a life of dependence upon the unchangeable Jehovah? "He has made, and he will carry us." Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and he has said, "I will *never* leave thee nor forsake thee."

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XLVI.

(1) There are considerable critical difficulties in the first two verses of this chapter. In order to justify the rendering I have given of them, and to shew that the authorized version is incorrect, it will be necessary to consider the precise meaning of the principal words that occur in them, which I shall do as briefly as possible. כרע—קרס. The first of these verbs signifies *to bend*, as the larger animals do the knee when they are going to lie down; thus in verse 23 of the preceding chapter: לי תכרע כל ברך

קרס is found no where else as a verb, but as a substantive it means *a hook*, Exod. xxvi. 11; from which we may infer that it has nearly the same import here as כרע; both verbs seem to have reference to the manner in which beasts of burden stoop down in order to be laden. לחיות. When ל is prefixed to a word after חיה that verb commonly signifies *to become*, or *to be converted into;* (See Gen. xvii. 16. Isaiah xxxii. 15. xxxv. 7.) I cannot find that ל ever has the force of *upon* in such a connexion. The Septuagint has εις θηρια.

נשאתיכם. "*Your carriages.*" So the authorized version; but there is no authority for this rendering, nor for that of Bp. Lowth—*burdens*. The Sept. appear to have read חם נשאו, *aspere aspera*. After carefully examining these and other translations, I feel satisfied that נשאת is the participle Benoni, and refers to Bel and Nebo; the י is paragogic; and the feminine gender is used, although Bel and Nebo are masculine, to denote weakness and inferiority; for Jehovah uses this same verb in speaking of himself, verse 4. See Critical Note (1) chap. xxvi. If the transition from the third to the second person seems too sudden, the Sept. would justify our reading חם for כם.

עמוסות. There seems to be an antithesis between this verb and the preceding. נשא is to *lift up*, to *carry with ease*; עמס to be *loaded, burdened*.

לעיפה. "*Even to weariness.*" ל has frequently the force of *usque ad*. See Taylor's Concordance.

ISAIAH, Sect. 43. Chap. XLVIII. 1—6.

1. Hear ye this, O house of Jacob ;
   Who are called by the name of Israel, and come forth from the fountain (1) of Judah ;
   Who swear by the name of Jehovah, and speak of the God of Israel,
   But not in truth, nor in righteousness ;—
2. For they are named from the holy city,
   And stay themselves upon the God of Israel,
   Whose name is Jehovah, God of Hosts.
3. The former things have I declared long ago ;
   And from my mouth have they gone forth, and I made them known ;
   Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass ;
4. Because I knew that thou art stubborn,
   And that thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy forehead brass.
5. Therefore I declared it to thee long ago,
   Before it came to pass, I caused thee to hear it,
   Lest thou should'st say, My idol hath done them,
   And my carved image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.
6. Thou hast heard all (2) this ; and will ye not acknowledge (3) it ?

SECT. 43. CHAP. XLVIII.

THE contents of this section are addressed principally to the carnal Jews, with whom Jehovah expostulates for their hypocrisy and formality, verses 1, 2; declares the reason why he had made known the fate of Sennacherib's army only a short time before it was destroyed, verses 3—5; promises further revelations respecting his people, and reproves them for their rebellion and obstinate unbelief, verses 6—8; intimates that he would deliver them from captivity, yet not for their sakes, but for his own glory, verses 9—11; appeals to his prophecies concerning Cyrus, as a proof of his being the great first cause of all things, verses 12—16; addresses a pathetic apostrophe to Israel as a nation, mingled with many encouraging promises, verses 17—19; and concludes with an exhortation to his people, now supposed to be captives in Babylon, to come forth and return home, verses 20—22.

Who among you hath declared these things?
Jehovah, who loved him.
He shall do his pleasure upon Babylon, and his arm shall be upon the Chaldeans.
I, I have spoken, yea, I have called him,
I have brought him, and prospered his way.

16. Draw near unto me; hear ye this;
From the first I have not spoken in secret,
From the time it began to be, I was there. (8)
And now the Lord, Jehovah, hath sent me, and his Spirit. (9)

17. Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel;
I am Jehovah, thy God, who instructeth thee to thy profit,
Who directeth thee in the way thou shouldest walk.—

18. O that thou hadst regarded my commandments!
Then should thy peace have been as a river,
And thy righteousness as the waves of the sea;

19. And thy seed should have been as the sand,
And the offspring of thy bowels as its gravel; (10)
Its name should not be cut off, nor destroyed, from before me.

20. Come forth from Babylon; flee from the Chaldeans,
With the voice of singing, declare ye, make known this;
Utter it to the end of the earth, Say ye;
Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

21. And they thirsted not in the deserts, through which he made them to walk;
He made the water to flow out of the rock for them,
He rent the rock asunder, and the waters gushed forth.

22. There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XLVIII. 1—5.

V. 1, 2. These verses describe the persons to whom Jehovah was about to speak. They were the *natural* descendants of Jacob, *through* the patriarch Judah; and they professed to fear Jehovah, and to worship him alone; but all was false and hollow. Their professions of love and reverence were not made *in truth*, neither were they accompanied with a corresponding *righteousness* of conduct.

"*Stay themselves upon the God of Israel.*" i. e. in *words;* they *pretend* to trust in him.

V. 3—5. "*The former things.*" Referring, probably, to the invasion of Sennacherib, and the destruction of his army. Jehovah had predicted this event in order that it might more clearly appear that he was the author of the deliverance which was then effected, and not the gods they some of them vainly worshipped. For his having foretold it, shewed that it was effected by his almighty arm, since it is impossible for any one to say, 'such a thing shall be,' but he who has all the causes that must bring it to pass in his hand.

"*Because I knew that thou art stubborn,*" &c. The Jewish people had shewn themselves *hard of belief*, and *insensible* to the mercies and judgments of their God from the first. They resembled a young bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, whose neck, as if it were a *sinew of iron*, refuses to bend according to the direc-

tion of the driver. Because of this unwillingness in them to see and acknowledge the hand of Jehovah in their deliverance from the Assyrians, on this account, he had apprized them of it by his prophet, that, as before remarked, they might be sure it was his work; otherwise they might be disposed to attribute it to their idols.

V. 6, 7. "*Thou hast heard all this,*" &c. The Jews could not deny that they had *heard* the prophecies of Isaiah respecting Sennacherib;—would they not then acknowledge that Jehovah had been the author of his destruction? would they still deny his divinity?

"*New things.*" Meaning the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and their deliverance from thence by Cyrus. Also, the spiritual deliverance of believers from the dominion of sin by Christ, of which the other was a figure.

"*Now are they produced,*" i. e. *these prophecies,* which God declares he had not revealed before, lest his rebellious people should employ them to an evil purpose.

V. 8. These four lines must be read alternately, thus:

"Yea, thou hast not heard, neither hast thou known,
For I knew that thou would'st surely act deceitfully;
Neither hath thine ear opened itself from the first,
For rebel hast thou been called from thy birth."

The sentiment contained in the first two lines is the same as that contained in the last two of the preceding verse. They had not *heard* nor *known* the prophecies because they would have abused them. For, from the first they had shewn themselves rebellious and obstinate. Compare verse 4.

V. 9. "*For the sake of mine own name,*" &c. The Jews were known to be the people who, in opposition

to all others, worshipped one God alone, Jehovah. Had he permitted them to be utterly destroyed by the Babylonians, it would have seemed as if he were unable to save them. Therefore he says, "*For mine own name's sake* will I not suffer them to be cut off.

Thus the honour of God, in the eyes of the world, is connected with that of his professed people; how careful then ought they to be, "So to let their light shine before men, that they may see their good deeds, and glorify their Father who is in heaven."

"*Not as silver.*" Jehovah had purified his people, by sending them into the *furnace of affliction;* yet he had not purified them *as silver* and other precious metals, are purified; for *they* are cast into the furnace seven times, until they come out perfectly free from dross; but Jehovah would only purge out a part of the wicked from amongst his people, leaving some still remaining, lest if he were to take away all but the truly righteous, they should seem to be destroyed as a nation.

V. 11. "*For how else,*" &c. i. e. "Were I not to deliver my people from the hand of their enemies, how would they triumph? How would they blaspheme my name, and mock my power as unable to save? But this shall not be, nor will I allow the glory that belongs to me, to be given to another."

V. 12, 13. Compare chapter xliv. 6, and Rev. i. 11—17.

V. 14, 15. The general import of these verses is precisely the same as the first five verses of chap. xli. The true God appeals to all true believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, if it was not he who had predicted the prosperity of Cyrus, and had sustained him.

"*Jehovah who loved him.*" Cyrus, as a heathen, was highly favoured by Jehovah in being chosen by him

to be the instrument of effecting the deliverance of his people from captivity and bondage. I doubt whether anything more is intended. We cannot, at least, I think infer from this single expression that Cyrus was the object of God's love, in the same sense as his people are, although undoubtedly he was the object of his peculiar care.

V. 16. Jehovah declares that from *the first*, from the time that he had begun to reveal his purposes concerning Babylon and Cyrus, he had not spoken in secret places, or in obscure, ambiguous language, but openly and clearly, by means of his prophet.

"*I was there*," i. e. from the time that these prophecies began to be accomplished, I, Jehovah, was present and ordered the execution of them.

"*And now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and his Spirit.*" Many commentators suppose these to be the words of the Son, who thus asserts that he had received a commission from his heavenly Father, to bring the Jews back to their own land. To me this interpretation seems most improbable; for what ground have we for attributing these words to the Son of God? Rather it is Isaiah himself who speaks here, and claims attention and respect, because he spoke not of himself, but was sent by Jehovah and his Spirit.

V. 17—19. This affecting expostulation is addressed to the Jewish church, but the application of it is general. It teaches us, that Jehovah requires nothing of his people, but what is for their good; and *corrects* and *chastens* them for their profit: that he is grieved, speaking after the manner of men, when they will not hear his voice and obey his commands, and therefore, that he has no pleasure in inflicting upon them either temporal or eternal judgments; and, lastly, it assures us of the enjoyment of spiritual peace and prosperity,

if we are obedient to the voice of Jehovah. Compare Matt. xxiii. 27.

"*Thy peace as a river.*" That is, *great, continual,* and *increasing;* for such is a river: it flows on perpetually, still increasing in depth and breadth, until it reaches the sea.

"*Thy righteousness,*" &c. Righteousness, is here put for the *fruits* of righteousness; joy, peace, hope, &c.; had the Israelites faithfully observed the commandments of Jehovah, these would have been great and abundant as the waves of the sea.

Although all boasting on account of good works is completely excluded throughout the word of God, yet nothing can be plainer than, that spiritual privileges and enjoyments are by the whole tenor of Scripture inseparably connected with holiness of life, and regard to the will of God; and he must indeed be strangely blinded by his prejudices or his passions, who can suppose that those may be possessed, while these are disregarded.

"*Thy seed should have been as the sand.*" Great increase in their numbers was one of the blessings frequently promised to the Israelites if they continued obedient; and on the contrary, diminution in their numerical strength, was one of the curses threatened against their disobedience. Compare Deut. xxviii. throughout.

V. 20, 21. "*Go ye forth,*" &c. The prophet here takes up the discourse, and as if the Babylonians had been subdued, and Cyrus had already published his decree, he calls upon the captive Israelites to come forth from idolatrous Babylon, which was doomed to destruction, and to make known to all the world the faithfulness, mercy, and power, of their God.

V. 21. There is here an evident allusion to the

miracles Jehovah performed for his people when he brought them out of Egypt. From the remembrance of what he then did for them, they are encouraged to trust to him for protection, and for the supply of all their wants, on their way to Jerusalem from Babylon.

V. 22. This verse, which seems to have no immediate connection with the preceding, but is rather put in opposition to verse 18, is particularly addressed to unholy professors of religion. If there are any persons more peculiarly troubled and wretched than others, they are those who *hold the truth in unrighteousness;* who sin against light and conscience. Let those therefore who desire peace, take care to keep a conscience voice of offence both towards God, and towards man.

REMARKS.

The great argument of this chapter is, the connection between holiness and happiness, and between sin and misery. And let me, reader, whoever you are, remind you of the infinite importance of ever feeling the certainty of this connection. It is the object of our spiritual adversary to lead us to doubt it; to persuade us that the indulgence of sinful passions and tempers will not necessarily prove the destruction of our peace and happiness. Various indeed are the "devices of Satan," by which he tries to drown the voice of *scripture, reason,* and *conscience,* with reference to this subject; but woe to that man who yields to his suggestions. Yet it may perhaps be questioned whether those inconsistent professors of religion alluded to, are so

miserable as has been represented; and certainly it must be admitted that, in many instances, they seem so to have their consciences *seared with a hot iron*, that they are not aware of their danger and of the delusive nature of their hopes, and consequently, in some sense, they *have* peace. But let it be observed, that the peace of which the prophet speaks, is of a far different description. It does not arise from ignorance and thoughtlessness, but is the result rather of a *consciousness* of safety, and of perfect dependence upon the mercy and power of God. Thus the sincere believer can *reflect* upon his state, and look forward to the judgment day, without alarm. This is a peace the wicked cannot enjoy.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XLVIII.

(1) Perhaps ממעי, *from the loins*, may be the true reading, as Archbishop Secker and others have conjectured.

(2) For רחזו, one M.S. has רחזו, which is probably the true reading.

(3) Heb. *Created*. Prophecies are said to be created, because the events they predict are as certain as if they were already done.

(4) ולא. The vau here seems redundant.

(5) אאריך. *I will produce*, or *lengthen out;* but to produce is to extenuate and diminish; hence, applied to anger, it means to mitigate.

(6) אחתם. This word occurs no where else, but the context sufficiently shews its meaning.

(7) One M.S. has שמי; the Sept. also supplies *ονομα*, which indeed is necessary to the sense.

(8) Bp. Lowth takes שם for a verb, not an adverb, and translates it, "*I have decreed it;*" but the usual rendering seems to me preferable, for Jehovah had not only decreed it from the time it began to be, but *before* it began to be.

(9) The sense of this line is ambiguous. It may mean either, that Jehovah had sent the prophet, and the Holy Spirit, or, that Jehovah and his Spirit had sent the prophet. The last I conceive to be the true interpretation.

(10) מעות is of doubtful signification. Bp. Lowth, after many Jewish commentators, translates it "*bowels;*" as if the meaning were, "The offspring of thy bowels shall be as numerous as the offspring of the bowels of the sea, that is, the fishes.

SECT. 44. CHAP. XLIX.

THE following section contains many striking prophecies relative to Christ and his church, delivered in the way of dialogue. It opens with an address of Messiah himself, declaratory of his appointment by the Father to be a teacher of righteousness, verses 1—3; then follows a dialogue between Jehovah and the great Head of the Church; in which the unbelief of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles are explicitly predicted, verses 4—13; the church is next introduced as making a complaint that she was forsaken of her God, because of the low state to which she was reduced: to this complaint Jehovah answers, by assuring her of his unchanging love, and by promising an immense increase in her numbers by the addition of believers from among the Gentiles, and the support of kings, verses 14—23; the chapter concludes with severe denunciations against all the enemies and oppressors of God's people.

ISAIAH, Sect. 44. Chap. XLIX. 1—6.

1. Listen to me, O islands, and attend ye distant people;
   Jehovah hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother he hath named me;
2. And hath made my mouth as a sharp sword,
   In the hollow of his land hath he hid me;
   Yea, he hath made me as a polished arrow,
   In his quiver hath he laid me up;
3. And hath said unto me,
   Thou art my servant Israel, in whom I will be glorified.
4. But I said, I have laboured in vain;
   I have spent my strength for nought and in vain;
   Yet my cause is with Jehovah, and my recompense with my God.
5. And now hath Jehovah said, who formed me from the womb to be his servant,
   To bring back Jacob unto him, and that Israel may be gathered to him; (1)
   (Surely I shall be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God shall be my strength)
6. Even he saith, It is too little that thou should'st be my servant,

To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will also give thee, to be a light to the Gentiles,
That thou may'st be my salvation to the end of the earth.

7. Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One,
To him that is despised, (2) to him that is abominated by the nation,
To the servant of rulers.
Kings shall see, and rise up; princes, and they shall worship,
Because of Jehovah, who is faithful;
The Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.

8. Thus saith Jehovah;
In a favourable time have I heard thee, in the day of salvation have I helped thee;
And I have formed (3) thee, and given thee, as a covenant to the people,
To restore the earth, to people the desolate possessions:

9. Saying to the prisoners, Come ye forth:
To those who are in darkness, Shew yourselves:
They shall feed by the ways, and on all high places shall be their pasture.

10. They shall not hunger, they shall not thirst,
Neither shall the heat smite them, nor the sun;
For he that hath mercy on them shall guide them, and lead them to fountains of water.

11. And I will make all the mountains a road, and
my high way shall they raise up.
12. Behold, these shall come from afar off,
And lo, these from the north and from the
west;
And these from the land of Sinim.
13. Sing, O ye heavens, and rejoice, O earth;
And break forth into singing, O ye mountains;
For Jehovah hath comforted his people, and
hath had compassion upon his afflicted.
14. And did Zion say, (4)
Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath
forgotten me?
15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that
she should have no compassion for the son
of her womb?
Yes, these may forget; but I will not forget
thee.
16. Behold, I have engraven thee upon my hands,
Thy walls are ever before me.
17. They that destroyed thee, shall hasten to become
thy children, (5)
And they who made thee desolate, shall become
thy offspring. (6)
18. Lift up thine eyes round about and see;
They are all gathered together, and come unto
thee:
As I live saith Jehovah,
Thou shalt clothe thyself with them, as with a
garment;
And thou shalt bind them on as a bride, her attire. (7)

19. For thy waste and desolate places, and thy land which was destroyed,
Shall now be too narrow for the inhabitants;
And those who swallowed thee up shall be afar off.
20. Yet shall the children born unto thee after thou hast lost the others, ([8]) say in thine ears,
The place is too narrow for me, make room for me that I may dwell.
21. And thou shalt say in thy heart, Who hath begotten me these?
I truly was childless and desolate, an exile, and a wanderer;
And who then hath brought up these?
Behold, I was left alone, these whence are they?
22. Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah,
Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles,
And to the people will I erect my standard;
And they shall bring thy sons, in their bosom,
And thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders;
23. And kings shall be thy protectors, and their queens thy nurses;
With their faces to the ground shall they bow down unto thee,
And the dust of thy feet shall they lick up.
And thou shalt know that I, Jehovah, disappoint ([9]) not those who wait for me.
24. Shall the prey of the mighty one be taken away?
And shall the captives of the terrible ([10]) be delivered?

25. Yea; for thus saith Jehovah,
The captives of the mighty shall be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible shall be delivered:
And I will contend with those who contend with thee,
And thy children I will save.
26. And I will make those who oppressed thee to eat their own flesh,
And they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with new wine;
And all flesh shall know that I, Jehovah,
Am thy Saviour and Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. XLIX. 1—3.

V. 1—3. These are undoubtedly the words of the Messiah, the anointed of Jehovah, who thus calls upon the Gentile world to pay attention to the gracious message he was commissioned to bring; what the speaker says concerning himself, suits him and none other. Let the reader consider the several declarations he makes.

"*Jehovah hath called me from the womb,*" &c. Jesus Christ had a name given him by God before he was born. Thus we read, Luke ii. 21. "His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb." Yet Vitringa does not think this is what is here meant, but rather that by the *name* of Messiah is signified his person, attributes, offices &c. all of which were declared and revealed long before he came into the world.

"*And hath made my mouth as a sharp sword,*" &c. The figures of a sharp sword, and a pointed arrow, are well-adapted to convey an idea of the power and authority with which our Lord taught his hearers. His words came home to their hearts and consciences, and as it were *peirced* them through, so that they were either melted into tears, or excited to furious rage. —Compare Psalm xlv. 2—5. Also Heb. iv. 12. The latter passage is to this effect; "The word of God is

quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;" &c.

"*My servant, Israel.*" Israel, in this place, clearly means the Messiah himself. The reason why he is thus called is, because the whole company of believers of which he is the head, and to every member of which he is closely united, has this title. Thus the church is called *Christ*, 1 Cor. i. 13. "Is Christ divided?"—and Col. iii. 11. "Christ is all," that is, all Christians form one Christ. This throws light upon St. Matthew's application of Hosea xi. 1. which has been usually considered as involving a great difficulty. *Israel* there means both the Jewish church, and Christ, both of which were called out of Egypt in infancy.

V. 4. Messiah here declares prophetically, the fruitlessness of his ministry among the Jews. As far as they were concerned, "he had spent his strength for nought." Not that none were converted and saved by his ministration; but the number was so small, compared with the body of the nation, that he might be said to have laboured in vain. See, as illustrative of this passage, Matt. xxiii. 37. Luke xix. 42. Yet, although the Messiah makes this complaint, knowing that the work he had undertaken was not his own exclusively, but that of his heavenly Father also, he doubted not of his final triumph; which assurance is thus expressed, "My cause is with Jehovah," &c. And what else is it but this feeling, this assured conviction that the cause is not his own but God's, that can support the Christian minister under the many discouragements he meets with, and the small effects which he too often witnesses from his preaching and exhortations? The cause of Jehovah must be good, and therefore shall prosper; and the reward of the *faithful* minister, whether he be a *successful* one or not, is sure.

V. 5. "*Surely I shall be glorious,*" &c. These words are inserted parenthetically, and are a sort of reply to the complaint in the preceding verse. The Messiah had there complained that he had laboured in vain; here he expresses his assurance notwithstanding that Israel, the Church of God, would be gathered, and he be glorified in the eyes of his heavenly Father. Compare John xvii. 5—24.

V. 6. Here we have an express promise given by the Father to the Son, that he should not only be the instrument of salvation to the Jews, but also to the world at large. Is it not then an astonishing proof of the blindness of the Jews that they should be so unwilling to admit the salvation of the Gentiles? But *has* Christ raised up the tribes of Jacob? Certainly he has not yet done so, except at least in a very limited sense, and therefore we may infer from this passage, as well as many others, that a complete restoration of the children of Israel to the favour of God will yet take place.

V. 7. "*To him that is despised,*" &c. Christ was, and still is, *despised* by the world at large, and *abhorred* by the Jewish nation; and he submitted to become a *servant* to its rulers, suffering himself to be unjustly condemned and punished, although he had legions of angels at his command, and could have destroyed his enemies in a moment.

"*Kings shall see, and rise up,*" &c. The meaning is, they shall see the light mentioned in verse 6, and acknowledging the wisdom, love, and power of Jehovah displayed in the gospel, bow down before the promised Saviour. But how can this be reconciled with the clause immediately preceding, in which it was declared that the Messiah should be the servant of rulers? To the Jews, who admit only a triumphant

Messiah, this must appear an inexplicable difficulty; but we know that the same Jesus who was crucified by Pontius Pilate, has since been adored by kings and emperors, who have acknowledged him to be king of kings, and Lord of lords.

"*Because of Jehovah,*" &c. That is, these things shall come to pass because Jehovah, who hath appointed thee for this work, is faithful.

V. 8. This promise seems to have reference to the intercession of the Saviour on behalf of this people, whose prayers the Father here declares he will always hear and answer.

St. Paul quotes this passage, 2 Cor. vi. 2. and adds; "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." As if he had said, Now is the time for you to seek Jehovah, for Jesus is exalted at the right hand of his heavenly Father, and ever liveth to make intercession for you.

"*A covenant.*" See chap. xlii. verse 6.

"*To restore the earth,*" &c. These expressions must be understood in the same manner as other similar ones in the same connection. Now in all other instances in which these terms occur, having a spiritual meaning attached to them, they denote the Gentile world. The *earth* therefore, and the *desolate possessions*, signify, the nations of the world ignorant of God and true religion, among whom the Messiah was appointed to sow the seed of the Gospel, and by it to cause those spots, which were barren in a spiritual sense, to bring forth true worshippers of Jehovah.

V. 9—11. Although the prophet has for some time lost sight of the deliverance from Babylon, he still speaks in language applicable to that event. With reference therefore to the "opening of the eyes of the Gentiles, and the bringing of them from darkness to

light," the Father addresses the Son as if he were appointed literally to bring his captive people out of prisons and dungeons. But the chains with which these prisoners are supposed to be bound are the chains of sin forged by Satan, and the darkness from which they are called forth, is the darkness that rests upon the mind of man in a state of nature.

" *They shall feed,*" &c. It would be conferring but little benefit upon a set of persons who were in a dungeon in a strange country far distant from their own, and separated from it by mountains, rivers, and deserts ; it would, I say, be conferring but little benefit upon persons in such a situation, merely to open their prison doors, and say, " go forth," without furnishing them with carriages or provisions, or anything else requisite for their journey. So would the benefits of redemption be small if Jesus had only opened for us the prison door, and we were afterwards left to ourselves to fight our own battles, and supply our own wants. But let not any one entertain thoughts so unworthy of his Redeemer. He not only calls us forth from prison; he promises also continually to defend and provide for his people, and to bring them in safety to their eternal home. Such appears to be the general import of this language; the particular meaning of each metaphor need not be further insisted upon.

V. 12. The universality of the above benefits, or the coming in of the Gentiles from the remotest parts of the earth, is here clearly intimated.

" *The land of Sinim.*" It is not known with certainty what country is meant by the land of Sinim. Most probably Egypt is intended, as that bordered upon the desert of Sin which lay to the south of Judæa.

V. 13. See chap. xliv. 23.

V. 14, 15. "*And did Zion say,*" &c. The right understanding of the remaining part of this chapter, will depend upon the meaning we attach to the word *Zion*. Some commentators explain it literally as if it signified the national Jewish church; but what is said verses 18, 20, and 22, does not accord with this interpretation; indeed the general tenor of the whole address seems to me plainly to imply that Zion is to be understood mystically, that is, of the invisible church composed both of Jews and Gentiles. But upon what then is this complaint supposed to be founded? and what is the particular period in the church's history referred to? I reply; Jehovah foreseeing his people would be very few in number, and these be greatly afflicted and persecuted, (as was the case from the time of the Babylonian captivity to the coming of Christ, during which period religion was at a very low ebb, and the true church might seem nearly destroyed) Jehovah, I say, foreseeing this, supposes the small remnant of his people to be ready to complain in a desponding tone, "Jehovah hath forsaken me," &c. But he asks; "Does my beloved church suppose that I have forgotten her? Let her not for a moment entertain such a thought." "*Can a woman forget her sucking child?*" &c. Yes, it may be even so. The tenderest and closest human ties may be forgotten and broken; mothers *have* disregarded the cries of their helpless offspring. But think not that my love to thee can ever change or diminish; think not that thy afflictions are ever disregarded by me. I may suffer thee to be tried and troubled for thy profit, but forget thee I cannot. "I Jehovah, change not." The beauty of this passage cannot be exceeded. And how full of consolation is it to the believer? How different the feelings and views it conveys to the mind of the Christian, from

those which are produced by the cold deductions, and dry maxims of philosophy?

V. 16. Addressing his church under the emblem of a city, Jehovah assures her that she was as much the object of his constant love and care, as if he had her walls graven as it were upon the palms of his hands, to remind him continually of her. Bp. Lowth thinks there is an allusion to some practice, common among the Jews, of making marks on their hands or arms by punctures on the skin, with some sort of sign or representation of the city or temple, to shew their affection and zeal for it.

V. 17. This was fulfilled of the literal Zion, when the heathen assisted the Jews in rebuilding their city and temple, according to the decree of Cyrus. (Ezra i.) But much more was it accomplished in the mystical Zion, when the Roman emperors, and their magistrates, who had so bitterly persecuted the followers of Christ, employed all their power and influence to promote the extension of the Christian religion throughout the world.

V. 18. Here the church is addressed as a widow, without children, and desolate. Such was her condition in the interval from Malachi, the last of the prophets, till the coming of Christ. But now Jehovah bids her arise and behold the Gentile converts flocking in crowds unto her, with whom she would be adorned as a bride by her attire.

V. 19. Again the metaphor of the 17th verse is resumed, and the vast increase of the church by the admission of the Gentiles is signified in expressive language.

V. 20. The promise in this verse confirms the view taken of verse 14. The *church* considered as an individual, the mother of children, is addressed, not the

Jewish nation. The children *promised* are Gentile members; the *lost* children are the Jews, belonging now no longer to the church of God.

"*The place is too narrow,*" &c. Every reader must know that the Christian church, from its first beginning, far exceeded the Jewish in the number of its members. The latter therefore is described as unable to contain the former.

V. 21—23. When Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, its inhabitants were scattered abroad over the face of the earth, and the church of God seemed to be annihilated, being, as far as the Jews were concerned, deprived of all its members. Whence then was it to be replenished? God answers; "Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles," &c.

"*And kings shall be thy protectors,*" &c. Constantine was the first prince in whom this prophecy was accomplished. In A. D. 321. he avowed himself a Christian, and took the church under his protection. From that period many are the instances in which the religion of Christ has been first embraced by kings and their consorts, and by them commended to their subjects. In fact does not every prince in Europe, with one exception, cherish what he conceives to be the Christian church? Yet what could be more unlikely than that these things should take place, when this prophecy was written? That person must be blind indeed who does not see here certain marks of the divine prescience.

"*With their faces to the ground,*" &c. This intimates, that although princes would become the patrons and guardians of the church, yet would they look upon her with reverence, and consider themselves but as her servants and ministers; as the attendants upon an infant monarch. The expressions employed, merely

denote that homage and reverence which it was, and still is, customary in the East, to pay to persons in an exalted station, and are not therefore to be interpreted too strictly.—See Gen. xlii. 6.

V. 24, 25. The *prey of the mighty*, and the *captives of the terrible*, are one and the same. The mighty and the terrible one is Satan, who is called by our Lord, "*the strong man.*" The prey which Jehovah declares shall be taken from him is the ransomed church, those whom the Son of God frees by his almighty power from spiritual bondage. Thus Christ himself declares with reference to his casting out devils from the possessed; "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."—Luke xi. 21.—Compare John viii. 36. Col. ii. 14. Such appears to be the principal thing intended in this passage; there may however be an allusion also to the deliverance of the Jews from captivity as a typical event.

V. 26. How terrible are the judgments denounced upon all oppressors of the church! "*They shall eat their own flesh, and be drunken with their own blood.*" No one will suppose this is to be understood literally. The meaning is, they shall be destroyed by themselves, through civil wars and intestine broils; as if a man should satiate his hunger with his own flesh. The prophecy was fulfilled very remarkably in the case of the Jews and Romans, both which people were destroyed by themselves, rather than by their enemies, soon after they first began to persecute the Christian church. If the reader wish to have this remark confirmed, he has only to read Josephus' history of the

Jewish wars; and the reasons assigned for the decay of the Roman Empire, by the infidel author of the Decline and Fall.

Let it be remembered that the denunciations which are here pronounced against persecuting nations generally, are equally applicable to every *individual* who attempts in any way to hinder the extension of religion, or who persecutes another because he is a serious and consistent Christian.

When we look upon the world, and consider, how few there are who possess real religion, how congenial the systems of infidelity are to human depravity, and how active and skilful its abettors are in disseminating their pernicious doctrines; we may be almost tempted to fear lest ungodliness and wickedness should at length reign triumphant over the earth. At such times it is consolatory to turn the thoughts to such a portion of Scripture as the foregoing, which assures us of the perpetual care of Jehovah over his church, of the certain reward of his faithful servants, and of the final destruction of all their enemies and oppressors.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. XLIX.

(1) "Five MSS. (two antient) confirm the Keri, or marginal correction of the Masoretes, לו, *unto him*, instead of לא, *not*, in the text."—Bp. Lowth. There can, I think, be little doubt that this is the true reading. The clause, "*That Israel may be gathered.*" evidently corresponds with the preceding, "*To bring back Jacob unto him.*" Besides, *Israel*, means the spiritual Israel, not the Jewish nation; and therefore the words, *although Israel be not gathered*, as in the authorized version, contain a sentiment which is not true; for it was certain Israel *would be* gathered.

(2) The sense requires us to read either נבזה, with Secker; or בזוי, as Le Clerc. The passive instead of the active form.

(3) יצרתי, *I have formed*, from יצר.—So the Sept. επλασα.

(4) "*And did Zion say;*" This sentence I read interrogatively, both because it is more agreeable to the construction of the original, and adds effect to the complaint which follows.

(5 and 6) בניך, seems to correspond with יצאו, in the next line. The latter word is used to signify the being born, in the preceding chapter, verse 1, and is translated by Bp. Lowth, *shall become thy offspring*. I think therefore we may render מהרו בניך, *shall hasten to become thy children;* although it must be confessed the structure of the sentence is not usual.

(7) "*As a bride.*" "The end of the sentence is manifestly imperfect. The Sept. help us out in this difficulty, and supply the lost word.—ως κοσμον νυμφη ככלה כליח.—The great similitude of the two words has occasioned the omission of one of them." Bp. Lowth.

(8) "*After thou hast lost the others.*" There is no English word that exactly answers to the Hebrew שכל, which signifies, the state of a woman who has lost all her children; (Lat. *orbitas.*) we are obliged consequently to translate it by a periphrasis.

(ᵍ) " *Who disappoint not those who wait for me,*" Or, upon whom those who wait, shall not be disappointed, or confounded. The construction of the original is complex, and cannot be rendered word for word.

(ʰ) "For צדיק read עריץ. A palpable mistake. The correction is self-evident from the very terms of the sentence, and from the necessity of ¦the strict¦ correspondence in the expressions between the question and the answer made to it."—Bp. Lowth.

SECT. 45. CHAP. L.

This section probably makes a part of the preceding prophecy. Jehovah now addresses the Jewish nation ruined and dispersed, and shews the reason why he had permitted them to be brought into this condition, viz. because of their sins, verses 1—3; in the next verse Messiah is brought forward in person, and relates, how he was endued by his heavenly Father with the qualifications requisite for the office he had undertaken, how he would be treated by the carnal Jews, and the final issue of his contest with them, verses 4—9; the two remaining verses are intended for the consolation of the pious, and the warning of the unbelieving, respectively.

ISAIAH, Sect. 45. Chap. L. 1—4.

1. Thus saith Jehovah;
   Where is the (1) bill of your mother's divorcement by which I have put her away?
   Or to which of my creditors have I sold you?
   Behold, on account of your iniquities ye are sold,
   And because of your transgressions is your mother put away.
2. Wherefore, when I came, was there no man to meet (2) me;
   When I called, was there none to answer?
   Is my hand so contracted that it cannot redeem?
   Or have I no strength to deliver?
   Behold, at my command I dry up the sea, I put rivers in the desert;
   Their fish putrify for want of water, and die of thirst.
3. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and put on sackcloth for their covering.
4. The Lord, Jehovah, hath given unto me the tongue of the learned,
   That I may know how to speak a word in season to the weary:
   He awakeneth me morning by morning,

He awakeneth mine ear to hear, as they that
are instructed.
5. The Lord, Jehovah, hath opened mine ear,
And I was not rebellious, I drew not backwards:
6. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks
to them who plucked off the hair;
I hid not my face from shame, and spitting.
7. But the Lord, Jehovah, helpeth me,
Therefore, am I not dismayed;
Therefore have I made my face as a flint,
And I know that I shall not be confounded.
8. He that justifieth me is near;
Who is he that contendeth with me? Let us
stand up together.
Who is my adversary? Let him come near
to me.
9. Behold, the Lord, Jehovah, helpeth me: Who
shall condemn me?
Behold, they shall all perish as a garment, the
moth shall eat them.
10. Who among you feareth Jehovah, obeying the
voice of his servant;
Yet walketh in darkness, and hath no light?
Let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and rest
upon his God.
11. Lo, all ye who kindle a fire, who light up (4)
torches;
Walk in the light of your fire, and of the torches
ye have kindled:
By my hand shall this be your end,
In sorrow shall ye lie down.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. L. 1.

V. 1. The Jewish nation, broken and dispersed after the capture of their city by the Romans, are now addressed. The church to which they belonged had been the *mother* of all true believers, and the spiritual spouse of Jehovah; but now she was like a woman divorced from her husband, and they, her children, as if they had been sold to satisfy the demands of his creditors. How then did this happen? Had the Lord indeed changed his mind towards the descendants of Jacob, and lost his affection for them, so that he wished to put them away, as a man might lose his affection for his wife, and divorce her without sufficient cause? Or was he compelled by any external necessity to give them up to destruction, as a man might be compelled to sell his children to pay his debts? No; it was not that Jehovah's love to his people was diminished, or that he was *unable* to save them from the hand of their enemies, but because of their own sins and iniquities that he had cast them off. The interrogation at the beginning has the force of a negative, and seems to imply, that Jehovah had *not* divorced the Jewish church; but Vitringa observes, with reference to this apparent difficulty, 'that if a wife were guilty of adultery, or other scandalous conduct, even supposing her husband, from kindness and compassion, should be disposed to forgive her, and still

retain her as his wife, the law would not allow him to do so, but he would be compelled, contrary to his inclinations, to put her away.' Thus Jehovah represents himself to the Jewish church as still willing to retain her, notwithstanding her having so frequently departed from him and served other gods, but the intrinsic holiness and justice of his nature could not admit of it. For the law of divorce among the Jews see Deut. xxiv. 1—3. Matt. xviii. 25, and xix. 3—9, are also illustrative of this passage.

V. 2, 3. "*Wherefore when I came,*" &c. This expostulation may refer, either, generally, to the invitations and promises given by Jehovah to the Jewish people, and which were one and all slighted by them; or, particularly, to the personal appearance of the Son of God himself amongst them. The latter interpretation appears to agree best with the context. Then it was, in a peculiar sense, that Jehovah *came* to his people; then it was that he *called* upon them with his own voice to repent and turn to him, but they would not. Thus St. John, in language much resembling this of the prophet, says; "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not? He came unto his own and his own received him not." John i. 10. Compare Matt. xxi. 37. From the latter passage we learn that the Jews' treatment of Christ was the immediate cause of their destruction by the Romans. But what is the meaning, in this connection, of the interrogations which follow; "*Is my hand so contracted that it cannot redeem?*" &c. They imply, that the reason why Jehovah had come and called in vain was, because the Jews doubted his *power* to help them. And was not this the ground on which they rejected Jesus, and would not acknowledge him as the promised Messiah? They could not believe that he, whom they

saw amongst them in appearance a common man, and who was born of poor parents, was the mighty Saviour they had so long expected. Notwithstanding, therefore, they acknowledged the truth of his miracles, they were afraid to receive him as their king, "lest the Romans should come and destroy their place and nation." John xi. 48. But was not this folly, thus to be afraid of a human power, instead of trusting in him who on former occasions had dried up the Red Sea, divided the river Jordan, and done many other wonderful works?

V. 4. This verse has been differently explained by commentators. The doubt is, whether the words are supposed to be spoken by the prophet in his own person, or by the Messiah. I am inclined to adopt the latter opinion, because of the connection between this chapter and the preceding, in the beginning of which, it is certain, Christ, and not the prophet, is the speaker. He here then represents himself in the character of a disciple, awakened every morning by his teacher, to receive his instructions; and as being, in this manner, qualified himself to instruct the ignorant and comfort the weary. Nor is there any thing contrary to the idea we are taught to form of the divine nature of the Son of God, in supposing him, as man, to be thus instructed by his heavenly Father. He says himself, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me;" John vii. 16. And again: "I have given unto them the *words which thou gavest me;* and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee," &c. John xvii. 8.

V. 5, 6. Nothing can be more exactly descriptive of the conduct of our Lord, and of the treatment he met with, than these two verses. He did not *rebel* against the appointments of his heavenly Father. He

finished the work he had given him to do, and his cry in his deepest agony was; "Not my will but thine be done."

How "*he gave his back to the smiters,*" &c. the reader need not be told.

V. 7—9. Messiah here speaks in the character of an innocent person about to be tried by a set of iniquitous judges upon false evidence. Thus our adorable Redeemer was in fact tried; and in this manner was he condemned as a blasphemer and an impostor. Yet was he not *dismayed* or *confounded.* "When he was reviled he reviled not again; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 23. Therefore he defied the malice of his enemies, and to the last reposed perfect confidence in the protection of the Father; who, although he was condemned by the Jewish council, was near *to justify* him; and did justify him, by raising him from the dead, and by pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples after that event: thus proving, that he was what he claimed to be, the eternal Son of God. Compare Rom. i. 4, and 1 Tim. iii. 16.

"*Behold, they shall all perish as a garment.*" So our Lord declares concerning the Jewish rulers, his enemies, "He shall miserably destroy those wicked men." Matt. xxi. 41. Such appears to be the only satisfactory application that can be made of the foregoing passage, in which the prophet speaks as the representative of Messiah, as in chap. viii.

V. 10. Although the exhortation contained in this verse will admit of a general application (see Remarks), it seems to be introduced here with particular reference to those disciples of our Lord amongst the Jews who, not being perfectly acquainted with the nature of his kingdom, were perplexed and troubled by many cir-

cumstances they witnessed, and by many of the sayings which he spoke; not being able, until their understandings were enlightened by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to reconcile them with their mistaken notions of their Messiah. Such persons are encouraged to wait patiently upon God, resting assured, that in due time he would comfort them, and guide them into all truth.

V. 11. These words are perhaps addressed particularly to the Pharisees and Sadducees, and other sects amongst the Jews, in our Saviour's time. These may be said, emphatically, to have *kindled a fire, and to have lighted up torches* of their own; or, in other words, having forsaken the revelation God had given them, to have invented a system of religion of their own, by which they regulated their lives, and by which they expected finally to obtain eternal blessedness. They are here, however, warned of the fallacy of their expectations. Notwithstanding their attention to the minutiæ of religion, their prayers and fastings, and other ostentatious acts of devotion, yet would they *lie down in sorrow;* in the hour of death they would find themselves destitute of that lively hope and solid peace which true religion brings.

REMARKS.

The two concluding verses of the foregoing chapter deserve especial notice. The former shews, that a sincere servant of God may for a long time be without those clear doctrinal views and that assurance of acceptance and eternal happiness, which some seem to make the test of true religion. But is it not to be feared, that many of those persons who boast of their

faith and confident assurance, are in truth further from the kingdom of God than such as are addressed in this passage? Only let us be sure that our religious dejection and doubt does not arise from the indulgence of unholy desires and sinful passions. Is it not mere hypocrisy for people to be lamenting their want of light and their spiritual deadness, when they know that they are living in sloth and sensuality? These words then are not intended for such persons; but for the humble and self-diffident, who from constitutional melancholy, or some external cause, are distressed with groundless doubts and fears respecting their salvation. The other verse is addressed to men of a very different character: to those who "trust in themselves that they are righteous;"—to the self-sufficient infidel, or the half-believing Christian;—to the framers of systems and doctrines without any reference to the word of God. And how strikingly is their folly and misery depicted? They are represented as being like a man who should prefer taking a journey by the glimmering light of a torch, to travelling by the full light of the noon-day sun. And what infidel or semi-christian can deny that his system of religion, if he can properly be said to have any, is full of uncertainty and contradiction? Compared with the clear light of the gospel, is it not as a candle to the sun? Are any such systems calculated to give solid peace to the mind in the hour of death? No; they may amuse and please for a season, but they will leave a man helpless at the last, and all they who trust in them "will lie down in sorrow."

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. L.

(1) Heb. "*This* bill."

(2) "*To meet me.*" These words are not in the original, but they seem necessary to complete the sense.

(3) בעל משפטי I cannot find that this phrase occurs elsewhere. It may mean either *my accuser*, or *my judge*. For the literal rendering of the Hebrew is, "*The lord, or master, of my cause.*"

(4) Instead of מאזרי *encompassing*, the true reading appears to me to be, as Archbishop Secker conjectured, מאירי *lighting*. For the verb מאזרי is not reciprocal or reflective, but transitive, and the action passes on to the following substantive; the literal rendering, therefore, of the present text would be, *encompassing*, not *yourselves with*, but *encompassing*, זיקות; now this, whatever may be the meaning of the latter word, makes no sense; the proposed alteration therefore seems to be required. As for זיקות translated in our Bibles *sparks*, it is an unusual word, and may as well mean torches as sparks, there being no way of determining its precise signification. The Septuagint render it by φλογα.

SECT. 46. CHAP. LI. V. 1—16.

THE people of God, suffering affliction, are directed for their encouragement to consider the case of Abraham, and how the promises made to him were fulfilled, verses 1, 2; like promises are made to the Church, and Messiah assures all believers of the speedy establishment of his righteous law, that is, of the Gospel dispensation, verses 3—5; and the eternal duration of the promises contained in it, is asserted, verse 6; to encourage his people still further under their trials, God reminds them of the frailty of their enemies, and of his own almighty power, verses 7, 8; as if impatient of delay, the church abruptly call upon him to arise and interpose on their behalf, verses 9, 10; without replying directly to this appeal, Jehovah continues the promises made, verses 8, 11—15.

Such is an outline of the contents of these sixteen verses, which I have made one section, not because they are unconnected with the preceding or following, but because this appeared to be the most convenient division.

ISAIAH, Sect. 46. Chap. LI. 1—5.

1. Hearken to me, ye that pursue righteousness, that seek Jehovah:
   Look unto the rock from whence ye were hewn, and to the hollow of the pit whence ye were dug;
2. Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who brought you forth:
   For I called him, being but one, and blessed him, and increased him.
3. For Jehovah will comfort ([1]) Zion, he will comfort all her waste places;
   And he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah;
   Joy and gladness shall be found in her, praise and the sound of melody.
4. Listen to me, O my people, and give ear unto me, ye nations; ([2])
   For a law goeth forth from me, yea, my righteous ([3]) law for a light to the people:
5. Quickly ([4]) doth my righteousness approach, doth my salvation go forth;
   Yea, my arms shall administer justice to the people,
   On me shall the isles wait, and on my arm shall they trust.

6. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and regard the earth beneath;
   For the heavens shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall wear out like a garment;
   And the inhabitants thereof, die like a gnat.(4)
   But my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be destroyed.
7. Hearken to me, ye that pursue righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law;
   Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be dismayed at their revilings;
8. For the moth shall consume them like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool;
   But my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation to everlasting.
9. Awake, awake, clothe thyself with strength, O arm of Jehovah!
   Awake, as in the days of old, in the former generations.
   Art thou not the same which cut in pieces Rahab, and wounded the dragon?
10. Art thou not the same which dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep?
    Which made the depths of the sea, a way for the ransomed to pass over?
11. And the redeemed of Jehovah shall return, and shall come to Zion with singing;
    And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
    Gladness and joy shall they obtain, sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
12. I, even I, am he that comforteth you:—

Who art thou that fearest a feeble man, that shall die,
And a son of Adam, that shall be made as grass;
13. And forgetest Jehovah, thy maker,
Who spread out the heavens, and founded the earth?
And fearest continually all the day, because of the fury of the oppressor,
As if he were ready to destroy;—and where is the fury of the oppressor?
14. The captive exile shall quickly (5) be delivered,
And shall not die in the pit, neither shall his bread fail.
15. For I, Jehovah, thy God,
Still the sea, although the waves thereof roar;
Jehovah, God of Hosts, is my name. (6)
15. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and with the shadow of my hand have I covered thee;
That thou mayest plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth,
And say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LI. 1, 2.

V. 1, 2. They that *pursue righteousness, and seek Jehovah*, are those who desire earnestly to obtain, not only the forgiveness of sins, but also *holiness*, in all its branches; and who ardently long for communion with God, and the enjoyment of his presence. These are the characteristics of true believers. Persons of this description, whether among the Jews captive in Babylon, or belonging to the Christian church under persecution, are directed for their consolation and encouragement to consider the case of Abraham and Sarah, the progenitors of the Jewish church.

God had called Abraham in his old age, when he was but *one*, that is, when he had no family, and promised him that his seed should be more numerous than the stars, and become a great nation; which promise he had fulfilled. Ought not then all his believing people to put implicit trust in him, and to "be fully persuaded that what he has promised, concerning the perpetual security of his church, he is able to perform?" As, already observed, this exhortation is not intended exclusively for the Jews, but for all believers, of whom Abraham may be regarded as the spiritual father; according to the words of the apostle; "He is the Father of *all* them that believe whether they be circumcised or uncircumcised, whether they be Jews or Gentiles." Rom. iv. 11.

V. 3. The return of the Jews from Babylon, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah, can hardly be regarded as the fulfilment of the promise contained in this verse. Did Judæa from that period resemble the garden of Eden, and enjoy perfect peace and tranquility? Was it not on the contrary ravaged continually by foreign armies; first the Egyptians, then the Syrians, and lastly the Romans? This prophecy therefore, must either have been accomplished spiritually, in the Christian church, which rose up after the abolition and total destruction of the Jewish œconomy; and compared with which the latter, just previously to its abolition, was but as a desert, being entirely devoid of religious fruit; or the fulfilment is yet future.

V. 4, 5. The speaker here is evidently the same person whose office and character are described in chap. xlii. 1—8, to which place the reader is referred for an explanation of the meaning of the several terms employed. I shall only here observe, that as these are the words of Christ, and foretel the establishment of the Gospel dispensation, it is but reasonable to conclude that the preceding verses refer to the same event.

V. 6. By *the heavens and the earth* in this verse, some commentators understand the whole Mosaic œconomy, both civil and religious; but if this were the meaning here, would God call upon his people to lift up his eyes to them? It is true these expressions are used symbolically for the law and its appendages in Haggai ii. and so interpreted by St. Paul, Heb. xii. 26, but in this place they must, I think, be taken literally. The import then, of this declaration is, that the visible heavens and earth *shall* pass away, at least, as to their present form and texture, but the blessings

derived to us by the redemption wrought out by Christ, shall be eternal. Compare xxiv. 35.

V. 7, 8. The scope of this whole discourse is consolatory and encouraging. The Saviour here suggests another topic of consolation to his people,—the frailty of their enemies. He addresses them as those who *know righteousness*. To know, in the language of scripture, is not only to understand and be acquainted with, but, often, it implies also to approve and love. The people then who *know righteousness*, &c. are those, who approve and love holiness, and have the law of God written in their hearts, so that they delight in it, and love to do it. See Rom. vii. 22. Heb. viii. 10. Such are all true followers of Christ. Such were the primitive disciples, for whom these words seem especially intended, although every individual Christian may justly take them for his own encouragement when suffering persecution for conscience' sake. Compare the words of Christ to his apostles, Matt. x. 28, "Fear not them which kill the body," &c.

V. 9, 10. These two verses contain a truly grand and striking apostrophe. Hitherto the Messiah had spoken; but now the afflicted church, as if impatient of delay, and as if the promises were long in being accomplished, break out in fervent prayer, and call upon Jehovah to save them from their enemies, as he had done his people in former days. An appeal is made to one attribute only of Jehovah, his power, signified by his *arm*. This had, as it were, lain asleep for many years; in calling upon it to *awake*, the church signify their confidence in its power when exerted in their defence. Knowing it was that same arm in which they trusted that in the days of old had "*cut in pieces Rahab and wounded the dragon*," &c.: that is, that had destroyed the Egyptians and their king, and had opened the Red Sea for the

Israelites to pass through it. Egypt is called Rahab also in Psalm lxxxvii. 4. and lxxxix. 10.

V. 11. The preceding two verses were an apostrophe from the church, and might be read in a parenthesis; this is a continuation of verse 8, thus;

"My righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation to everlasting;
And the redeemed of Jehovah shall return," &c.

The language is exactly similar to chap. xxxv. 10, which see.

V. 12, 13. "*Who art thou that fearest,*" &c. Whether we suppose these words to be addressed to the Jews afraid of their oppressors in Babylon; or to the primitive Christians terrified by the threats and violence of the Roman magistrates, nothing can be imagined better calculated, in either case, to inspire them with courage and confidence. When Jehovah himself, the Eternal Creator of all things, was on their side, would they be afraid of a feeble mortal like themselves? *Where was the fury of the oppressor?* As far as regarded their chief good, their eternal happiness, it was no where but in their own imaginations, for their persecutors, whatever they might do to their bodies, could not deprive them of everlasting life. Such a passage as this must have been full of consolation to those Christians who suffered during the ten persecutions, and doubtless was especially intended for them.

V. 14. The promise contained in this verse, may at first sight appear to belong rather to the captive Jews in Babylon, than to the Christian church under the persecuting Roman emperors. But as it is not necessary to interpret every expression in a prophecy in a strictly literal sense, these words may merely signify, generally, that Jehovah would so watch over and protect his church, that however it might be oppressed and

injured, it should never be destroyed. He might suffer it, like a helpless *captive* cast into a pit or prison, to endure privations and injuries, but he would never permit it to perish. No doubt, however, the promise is worded in this manner, that it might console the Jews with the hope of a speedy return from Babylon.

V. 15, 16. The sea, the heavens, and the earth, are in this instance to be understood figuratively. By the *sea* and its *waves*, are meant the enemies of God's servants and their persecuting rage. *The heavens* and *the earth* signify the Christian church, the former the ministers of religion, the latter the people of which it is composed. The person addressed is the Messiah. Jehovah then declares that he would surely *still* the fury of his people's enemies, however fiercely they might rage; for he had appointed and fitted the Saviour so long promised, to bring in a new dispensation, that is, the Christian, which whatever opposition it might meet with, would finally be established by him.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LI.

(1) Heb. "*Hath comforted;*" to denote the certainty of the thing predicted.

(2) "For לאומי, *my nation*, the Bodleian M. S. and eight others, (two ancient) read לאמים, *ye nations*: and so the Syriac. God in no other place calls his people לאמי. Transcribers frequently omitted the final ם of nouns plural, and supplied it, for brevity's sake, by a small stroke thus עמי׳: which mark, being effaced or overlooked, has been the occasion of many mistakes." Bp. Lowth.

(3) משפטי. See note, chap. xlii. 3.

(4) כמו כן. It seems very evident that כן here must be a substantive to make this clause agree in structure with the two preceding: "The heavens vanish like smoke—the earth—like a garment—and the inhabitants perish"—like what? Something, no doubt, very mean and insignificant; and what can be more so than a gnat? This rendering of the word is founded on Exodus viii. 12, where כנים means, I conceive, rather *gnats*, or *musquitoes*, than lice, as in our translation. For is it not more natural to suppose that the *dust* was turned into flying insects, like gnats, rather than into lice? Origen says, כנים were little insects that flitted about in the air, so small that they could scarcely be seen; and that they stung very sharply. Robertson's Thesaur. sub voce כנן.

(5) Heb. "*Hasteneth to be delivered.*" צעח is of doubtful signification; and the meaning usually assigned to it in this place seems purely arbitrary. Bp. Lowth's rendering of the passage is:

"He marcheth on with speed, who cometh, to set free the captive."

The Sept. is very unlike the Hebrew as it now stands. There is probably some slight error in the text.

(6) Instead of שמו, *his name*, the Sept. read, שמי, *my name*.

SECT. 47. CHAP. LI. 17—23. CHAP. LII. 1—6.

THIS section contains, 1st. A hortatory and consolatory address to the Jewish church in Babylon, stupified and in a manner intoxicated, by the judgments of God; from which she is now promised deliverance, Jehovah declaring that he was about to remove his judgments from her and to inflict punishment upon her enemies; 17—23. 2ndly. A promise of the restoration to Jerusalem of her ancient glory and beauty, and of freedom from the intrusion of idolatrous foreigners within her sacred walls. Chapter lii. 1—6.—But although this appears to be the primary and obvious application of the prophecy, the reader must not forget that the above events were *shadows* of better things.—See Observations upon verse 6.

ISAIAH: Sect. 47. Chap. LI. 17—22.

17. Awake, (1) awake; arise, O Jerusalem,
Who hast drunk from the hand of Jehovah,
the cup of his wrath;
The full (2) cup of trembling hast thou
drunken and wrung out.
18. There was not one to comfort her of all the
sons she had brought forth;
Nor was there one to take her by the hand of all
that she had nourished up.
19. These two things are come upon thee; who
condoleth with thee?
Desolation and destruction, and famine, and
the sword; who comforteth thee?
20. Thy sons are faint, they lie down at the entrance
of all the streets,
Like a wild bull (3) in the toils, filled with
the wrath of Jehovah, the rebuke of thy
God.
21. Therefore, hear now this, thou who art
afflicted, and made drunk, but not with
wine;
22. Thus saith thy Lord, Jehovah, and thy God,
who contendeth for his people,

Behold, I take out of thy hand, the cup of trembling,
The full (5) cup of my wrath, thou shalt drink of it no more;
23. And I will put it into the hand of thy oppressors, who say to thee;
Lie down, that we may pass over; and make thy body as the ground, and as the street, for passers by.

CHAP. LII.—1. Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!
Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, thou holy city;
For the uncircumcised and the unclean shall no more enter into thee.
2. Shake thyself from the dust, arise, sit on thy throne, (1) O Jerusalem:
Loose the chains from thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.
3. For thus saith Jehovah,
For nought were ye sold, and without money shall ye be redeemed;
4. For thus saith the Lord, Jehovah,
My people went down into Egypt to sojourn there;
And the Assyrian hath oppressed them without measure; (2)
5. And now what do (3) I here, saith Jehovah?
For my people have been taken away with impunity,

And they that rule over them blaspheme, (4) saith Jehovah,
Yea, continually every day my name is despised.

6. Therefore my people shall know my name, therefore, I say, in that day, *shall they know*,
That it is I, Jehovah, that say, Behold me!

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LI. 17—20.

V. 17—20. "The bold image of the cup of God's wrath, often employed by the sacred writers, is no where handled with greater force and sublimity than in this passage of Isaiah. Jerusalem is represented in person as staggering under the effects of it, destitute of that assistance which she might expect from her children; not one of them being able to support or to lead her. They, abject and amazed, lie at the head of every street, overwhelmed with the greatness of their distress, like the oryx (wild bull) in a net, in vain struggling to rend it and extricate himself. This is poetry of the first order, sublimity of the highest proof."—Bp. Lowth.

Few of my readers, I imagine, will dispute the justness of the last remark. The imagery here indeed is grand beyond expression. And such, truly, as is described in this passage, was the condition of Jerusalem, when her walls were laid even with the ground by the Chaldean armies, and all her inhabitants, unable to defend their mother, were carried away to Babylon; which, doubtless, are the circumstances primarily referred to. But, as if the seventy years appointed by Jehovah for her continuance in this desolate condition were elapsed, she is now called upon to awake, as from a state of stupefaction, with the assurance of being again restored to her pristine glory.

"*Two things—desolation and destruction, the famine and the sword.*" That is, desolation by famine, and destruction by the sword; taking the terms alternately." Bp. Lowth.

V. 21—23. The import of the promise contained in these verses is, that Jehovah was about to transfer the judgments he had caused to be inflicted upon his people, to those who had been employed as the instruments of inflicting them; which is thus expressed,—"*Behold, I take out of thy hand, the cup of trembling,—and I will put it into the hand of thy oppressors,*" &c. Accordingly, after the seventy years' captivity were expired, and the Jews had returned to their native land, those nations which had been the instruments of punishing them, namely, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, and the Syrians, were themselves visited with the same calamities they had inflicted upon God's people, and within two hundred years were all of them conquered and made tributary by Alexander the Great, while the Jews, a circumstance that ought not to pass unnoticed, were treated by him with great respect, and obtained from him some peculiar privileges.[1]

"*Thou shalt drink of it no more.*" This does not mean, "thou shalt *never* drink of it again," or in other words, thou shalt no more be afflicted by thine enemies, for this was not the case with the literal Jerusalem; but the meaning is rather, "thou shalt not *continue* to drink of the cup," that is, my judgments against thee shall cease, at least for a time. See Jer. xxv.

"*Who say to thee, lie down, that we may pass over,*" &c. A very strong, and most expressive des-

[1] Josep. Ant. lii. c. 8. Prideaux's Con. Vol. i. p. 486.

scription of the insolent pride of Eastern conquerors; which though it may seem greatly exaggerated, yet hardly exceeds the strict truth. The Emperor Valerianus being through treachery taken prisoner by Sapor king of Persia, was treated by him as the basest and most abject slave; for the Persian monarch commanded the unhappy Roman to bow himself down, and offer him his back, on which he set his foot, in order to mount his chariot or his horse. Lactantius, De Mont. Persec. c. v. Aur. Vict. Epit. cap. xxxii." Bp. Lowth.

That the Jews were treated with greatest insolence and scorn by the Chaldeans is evident, from the whole of the Lamentations of Jeremiah,—from Psalm lxxxix. 41. and many other passages.

CHAP. LII.

V. 1, 2. The chief difficulty in the interpretation of this part of Isaiah's prophecies, arises from there being a constant reference to two subjects and two events, the one preparatory to, and symbolical of, the other; and which therefore are spoken of as one; but sometimes the language is best adapted to the former, and sometimes to the latter. It should be observed however, that for the most part the language is far more suitable to the invisible church, and the events connected with it, than it is to the literal Jerusalem—See Prelim. Diss. p. 31.

As to the verses now under consideration, they are, I conceive, to be understood, like the preceding, as addressed primarily to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the literal Jewish Church captive in Babylon. In the former paragraph that church was represented

under the figure of a woman drunk and stupified with the wrath of Jehovah; here she is addressed as one imprisoned and in chains, defiled with fifth, and clothed in rags. A lively and affecting image this of the state of the Jewish church in Babylon. From this miserable condition she is here promised deliverance, and called upon, as before, in language adapted to the character and circumstances under which she is addressed, to arise and exchange her rags and filth for splendid attire, and the dust for a throne; Jehovah declaring at the same time that her heathen enemies, "*the uncircumcised and unclean*" should no more injure and oppress her.

Such must be the application and explanation of these verses if *Zion* and *Jerusalem* are taken literally; but the promise last referred to naturally leads us to turn our eyes from the Jewish to the Christian church, in which latter although the promise, respecting the total absence of all the unholy and impure, has not been plenarily accomplished, (for, alas! indeed it must be admitted that the majority of its professed members are such,) yet, compared with the former, especially just before its extinction, the Christian church in its laws, discipline and worship, is free, beautiful, and glorious. However, there can, I think, be little doubt that the full accomplishment of what is here spoken with reference to the condition of the church, is yet future.—Compare Rev. xxi. 27.

V. 3—5. These words seem plainly to be directed to the captive Jews. They had been *sold for nought*; that is, they had been given up into the hands of the Chaldeans by Jehovah, for their sins, not because he received any *price* for them; and therefore they should be *redeemed without money*; or in other

words, they should be brought back without their being required to pay any price for their redemption. For, as in former times when they had gone down *into Egyyt to sojourn*, the Egyptians had oppressed them and Jehovah delivered them, not they themselves; so would it be now; he would not quietly look on, and suffer them to be oppressed without measure, and finally destroyed; but would interpose on their behalf. This is what seems to be implied in the expression, *Now, what do I here?* by which Jehovah intimates that he would not remain an idle spectator of his people's sufferings.

"*My people have been taken away with impunity,*" &c. Meaning, that he had hitherto permitted the Chaldeans who had carried away his people, and continually blasphemed his name, to go unpunished.

V. 6. "*My name.*" i. e. my truth, my power, and my unchanging love; all which are comprehended in the name of Jehovah. His people *knew* these, or in other words, experienced the reality of them, in their release from Babylon. But much more does the Christian know them in his redemption.

"*That say, Behold me!*" See chap. xli. 27. No portion of Isaiah's writings involves more difficulty to my mind in the interpretation than the foregoing. The reason of which, as already remarked, is, that two subjects and two events are referred to, and the language employed is of that description that it is scarcely possible to say to which of them it is most suitable. The candid reader will not then, I trust, be hasty to condemn, if the above explanation should not be found at first sight to clear up every difficulty. I confess, I was for a long time doubtful whether to give a literal or a figurative interpretation, to this section; but after mature deliberation,

the former, as the primary meaning of the prophecy, seemed most satisfactory. The observations of Bp. Lowth upon the double application of this part of Isaiah, are so just and important, that for the sake of those who may not possess his work, I shall transcribe them.

"The subject of Isaiah's prophecy, from the fortieth chapter inclusive, has hitherto been, in general, the deliverance of the people of God. This includes in it three distinct parts, which however have a close connection with one another: that is, the deliverance of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon; the deliverance of the Gentiles from their miserable state of ignorance and idolatry; and the deliverance of mankind from the captivity of sin and death.[1] These three subjects are subordinate to one another, and the two latter are shadowed out under the image of the former. They are covered by it as by a veil; which however is transparent and suffers them to appear through it. Cyrus is expressly named as the immediate agent of God in effecting the first deliverance. A greater person is spoken of as the agent who is to effect the two latter deliverances; called the Servant, the elect of God, in whom his soul delighteth; Israel in whom God will be glorified. Now these three subjects have a very near relation to one another: for as the agent who was to effect the two latter deliverances, that is, the Messiah, was to be born a Jew with particular limitations of time, family, and other circumstances; the first deliverance was necessary in the order of providence, and according to the determinate counsel of God, to the accomplishment of the two latter deliverances; and the second deliverance was necessary to

[1] He might have added also, the deliverance of the universal church from all her enemies and all her sorrows.

the third, or rather, was involved in it, and made an essential part of it: this being the case, Isaiah has not treated the three subjects as quite distinct and separate in a methodical and orderly manner, like a philosopher or a logician, but has taken them in their connective view; he has handled them as a prophet and a poet;[1] he has allegorized the former, and under the image of it has shadowed out the two latter; he has thrown them all together, has mixed one with another, has passed from this to that with rapid transition, and has painted the whole with the strongest and boldest imagery.

"This seems to be the nature and the true design of this part of Isaiah's prophecies; and this view of them seems to afford the best method of resolving difficulties in which Expositors are frequently engaged, being much divided between what is called the literal and the mystical sense, not very properly; for the mystical or spiritual sense is very often the most literal sense of all."

These remarks are certainly deserving the reader's most attentive consideration.

[1] I cannot say I approve of this way of speaking of the sacred writers. It is placing them too much upon the same footing with uninspired authors. Would it not have been better to have said, "*The Holy Spirit led or taught him to treat of them after a different manner.*" Perhaps this may be what the Bishop intended, but his language is liable to be dangerously perverted.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LI. 17—22.

(1) התעורדי. This is not the same word as is used chap. lii. 1, being in Hithpahel, whereas that is in Kal. It means literally, *arouse thyself.* However the common rendering sounds better to the ear.

(2) "*Full.*" קבע from which קבעת is derived, signifies, says Schultens, in Arabic, to *cover, muffle, crown.* Hence it comes to mean a *helmet;* and applied to a cup, may signify its being *crowned with liquor,* or full.—See Taylor's Concordance.

As to the usual translation of this word, *dregs,* it is altogether without foundation; nor can it properly be so rendered in verse 22.

(3) ראם This animal is numbered amongst those permitted to be eaten; Deut. xiv. 5. It may mean a Buffalo or Bonasus.

(4) See above, note 2.

CHAP. LII. 1—6.

(1) There is no word for throne in the original, but it is evidently to be understood.

(2) אפס. *Limitation, boundary.*

(3) "*What do I here,*"—Compare with this, 1 Kings xix. 9.

(4) Many MSS. read יזלילו, some יזללו.—The true reading is I think manifestly יזללו, *they profane*; that is, my name.—Compare xlix. 11. According to this translation משלו means the Chaldeans. But perhaps a better rendering would be, "And his (their) rulers are profaned,"—viz. the rulers of the Jews.—See chap. xliii. 28.

SECT. 48. Chap. LII. 7—15. LIII.

This section contains one of the clearest, most interesting, and most wonderful prophecies in the Bible. It is of the responsive or interlocutory kind, in which various speakers are introduced, who alternately take up the discourse, and answer each other. (See Preliminary Dissertation, p. 26.) It opens with a joyful exclamation of the ministers of the church, who seem to behold, from the walls of Jerusalem, the long-expected Messiah coming towards them, verse 7; two companies of believers then join in celebrating this glorious event, verses 8—10; upon this the Messiah himself bids his people forsake the corrupt Jewish church without fear, verses 11, 12; Jehovah next speaks, and foretels the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, and the conversion of the Gentiles, verse 13, 14. In the beginning of chap. liii. Messiah, or his ministers, complain of the unbelief of the Jewish nation, verse 1; in the remaining part of the chapter, Jehovah and the church, alternately, speak of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ; all of which, together with their final consequences, are so distinctly foretold, that the whole has more the appearance of a history than a prophecy.

ISAIAH, Sect. 48. Chap. LII. 7—10.

WATCHMEN UPON THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM, OR MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!
That proclaimeth peace, that bringeth glad tidings of good!
That proclaimeth salvation, that saith to Zion, Thy God reigneth!

FIRST COMPANY.

8. Let thy watchmen lift up the voice, (1) with the voice together let them sing;
For they shall behold with open eyes, (2) when Jehovah returneth to Zion.

SECOND COMPANY.

9. Break forth, sing together, ye desolate places of Jerusalem,
For Jehovah hath comforted his people, hath redeemed Jerusalem.

CHORUS.

10. Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm, in the sight of all the heathen;

For he is cut off from the land of the living, for
the transgression of my people is he smitten. ([10])

CHURCH.

9. And his grave was appointed with the wicked,
but with the rich was his tomb; ([11])
Because he had done no violence, neither was
guile found in his mouth:
10. Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him with
affliction.
When thou [12] shalt have made his soul an offering
for sin,
He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his
days;
And the purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his
hands.

JEHOVAH.

11. Of the travail of his soul shall he see, and be
satisfied.
By the knowledge of himself shall my righteous
servant justify many;
Yea, their iniquities he shall bear.
12. Therefore I will appoint him a portion among
the mighty,
And with the strong shall he divide the spoil;
Because he poured out his soul unto death, and
was numbered with transgressors,
And he ([13]) bare the sin of many, and maketh
intercession for transgressors.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LII. 7.

V. 7. THESE are the words of the ministers of religion; who, in the character of watchmen placed upon the walls of Jerusalem, behold a messenger of good tidings swiftly approaching over the tops of the distant hills, and immediately communicate the glad intelligence to those within the city, that is, the church, by breaking forth into a song of gratulation and praise. But who is this messenger? He is no other than the Messiah himself, as the reader will instantly perceive by comparing this passage with chap. lxi. 1, 2. The same person is evidently the subject in both places, and the latter, it is certain, upon the authority of Christ himself, belongs to him. And was he not indeed a *messenger of glad tidings?* And did he not proclaim *peace* and *salvation?* Yes, he proclaimed forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation with God; these were tidings of peace. He proclaimed the promise of eternal life to as many as should believe on his name; and these were tidings of salvation. He proclaimed, further, that his heavenly Father was about to establish a glorious kingdom upon earth, to begin at his death, and to be perfected at his second coming. Wherever he came he spoke of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; and thus he declared to Zion that her *God was about to reign.* See Mark i. 14. Luke viii. 1. *Zion* here clearly means the church.

that they had not time to attend to the observance of legal purifications and ceremonies. (Exodus xii.) Applied to the primitive disciples' coming out from the Jewish church, it can only be understood in a general sense, as intimating that Jehovah would be their guide and protector, and therefore they need not fear their persecutors.

V. 13. Here commences that wonderful, minute, and faithful description of the office, character, and glory of the Messiah, which has struck conviction to the minds of many of the most hardened infidels; and which furnishes an argument for the divine origin of the Bible that deistical sophistry and impiety have never yet been able to gainsay or resist. Jehovah speaks; and foretels the future exaltation and glory of his beloved Son, now become, for our sakes, *a servant*, and who is therefore addressed as such by his heavenly Father. See Notes, chap. xlii. 41. The watchmen had seen him at a distance; God himself now, as it were, presents him to them, and shews the purpose and end of his coming.

"*He shall be raised up,*" &c. St. Paul furnishes the best commentary that can be given upon these words; "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him (Jesus), and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Philip. ii. 9.

V. 14, 15. The humiliation and after glory of our adorable Redeemer are clearly predicted here, and in the following chapter. When his *countenance was disfigured* with tears and blood; and *his body* with stripes and wounds, and he hung in expiring agony upon the cross, to which he had been fastened by the hands of wicked men, then they who beheld him, *looked upon him with scorn*, and mocked and despised him.

But after he had risen from the dead, and was preached to the Gentiles, they *regarded him with reverence*[1] and wonder; even kings acknowledged him to be their king, and *held their peace before him*, submitting to learn of him in silence by the mouth of his ministers: and thus they to whom the promise of a Saviour *had not been made known, saw* his glory, and *understood* and believed the promises of salvation made through him. The last clause is quoted by St. Paul, Rom. xv. 21, to justify his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, who are therefore those to whom the Messiah had not been *made known*, or, as it is in the place referred to, *spoken of*.

CHAP. LIII.

V. 1. These are the words, either of the Messiah, or of the watchmen before mentioned, the apostles and first preachers of the gospel; and intimate, that the glad tidings they proclaimed would not be believed by the Jewish nation. For the interrogation here has the force of a strong negative, implying that none, or at least very few, would believe. St. Paul so interprets it Rom. x. 16.

"*The arm of Jehovah;*" i.e. the salvation of Jehovah, the power of Jehovah to save man exhibited in the gospel, which is called by the apostle, "*the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*" Rom. i. 16. 1 Cor. i. 24. The phrase here must have the same meaning as in verse 10 of the preceding chapter; and this shews that there is but a faint allusion, if any, to the proclamation of Cyrus in the latter place.

[1] See Critical Notes.

V. 2. Jehovah thus proceeds to speak of the condition of his servant Messiah. The same metaphors are employed as in chap. xi. which have been already explained. The low condition of the parents of Christ, the obscurity of his birth, and the meanness of his education, are principally intended. In propagating and establishing his doctrines he was wholly unsupported by human power; indeed both the Jewish and Gentile authorities were opposed to him; and thus with his little band of followers he might well be likened to a tender plant, exposed to the rude blasts of the north wind.

"*He hath no form nor comeliness,*" &c. The *doctrine* of Christ seems to be here chiefly referred to. His being unattended, indeed, with the outward pomp and splendour of royalty was one reason why he had no *form nor comeliness* in the eyes of the Jewish people. "Is not this the carpenter's son, said they, the son of Mary?" Mark vi. 3. However, it was not so much his external appearance that offended them, as the nature of his doctrines, which cut up the roots of their self-righteousness, and exposed the hypocrisy and wickedness of their hearts, and shewed the proud Pharisees that they stood in as much need of repentance as the poor publicans whom they hated and despised. And so it is now: the doctrine of salvation through a crucified Saviour has no more attractions in the eyes of the self-righteous, nominal Christian, than it had in the eyes of the Jews.

V. 3. "*He is despised and rejected by men,*" &c. Few of my readers will desire any commentary upon these words. The history of Christ, as related by the evangelists, furnishes the best that can be given. They come better from Jehovah than from the church, who throughout this chapter, speak in the first person,

and would therefore have said by *us*, rather than by *men*, as in the next verse.

"*As one that hideth his face.*" 'Mourners covered up the lower parts of their faces, and their heads, 2 Sam. xv. 30; and lepers were commanded by the law (Lev. xiii. 45) to cover their upper lip.' Bishop Lowth. This would imply, "He was regarded by us as a leper." Perhaps, however, the allusion may be generally to persons who from bashfulness hide their faces, and are in consequence treated with neglect and contempt; whilst a bold, open front, on the contrary, always commands attention and respect.

V. 4—6. The company of the faithful converted from amongst the Jews, thus acknowledge their own sinfulness, and their firm belief in the propitiatory nature of those sufferings which the Messiah endured for their sakes. The language is clear and explicit, nor is the doctrine of the atonement more plainly taught anywhere in the New Testament than it is here. See Remarks.

V. 7. "*He openeth not his mouth.*" "And when Jesus was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly." Matt. xxvii. 12—14. Can anything correspond more exactly than the history and the prophecy in this case?

V. 8. "*From help and from justice is he taken away.*" This is an obscure passage in the original, and has been variously interpreted. (See Critical Notes.) The *general* scope, however, is, clearly, to shew that the Messiah would be treated with more than ordinary injustice and cruelty; and that he would be denied a regular trial, and those helps which are

usually granted to persons accused; as was indeed the case; for Jesus was apprehended, condemned, and crucified, all within the space of twenty-four hours.

"*Who testifieth to his way of life?*" The Misna, which is a collection of Jewish traditions published in the second century of the Christian era, states, that before any one was punished for a capital crime among the Jews, proclamation was made before the prisoner in these words: 'Whoever knows anything concerning his innocence, let him come and declare it.' On which passage the Gemara of Babylon, (a sort of commentary upon the Misna,) observes, 'before the death of Jesus, this proclamation was made for forty days, but no defence could be found.' This statement we know to be false, but it shews that there was such a custom as that mentioned in the Misna. It is plain from the history of the four evangelists, that in the trial and condemnation of Jesus no such rule was observed. No proclamation was made for any person to bear witness to his character and innocence; nor did any one voluntarily come forward to attest it. John xviii. 20. This, therefore, was one remarkable instance of hardship and injustice, amongst others predicted by the prophet, which our Saviour underwent in his trial and sufferings. These remarks contain the substance of what Bishop Lowth has written upon this passage, and are so satisfactory that I deem it unnecessary to notice other interpretations.

V. 9. "*And his grave was appointed with the wicked,*" &c. It is almost unnecessary to remind the reader that this prophecy was literally accomplished. Jesus expired between two thieves; and no doubt his crucifiers intended that his *grave* should be as dishonourable as his death; but Joseph of Arimathea, a *rich* man, went and begged his body of Pilate, and

laid it in his own new sepulchre, in which none had ever before been buried." Matt. xxvii. Vitringa says, that the Jews were accustomed to bury persons crucified near the place of punishment. Thus probably the Jews purposed to cast the body of Jesus, together with those of the two thieves, into a dishonourable tomb.

"*Because he had done no violence.*" This clause may be connected either with the preceding or that which follows. If it be connected with the former, the sense will be; that he had his tomb with the rich, *because he had done no violence*, &c.; if with the latter, the words must be rendered, "*Although* he had done no violence, &c. yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him."

"*When thou shalt have made his soul an offering for sin.*" Sometimes the act of the atonement is ascribed to the Son, and sometimes to the Father. Thus Christ says concerning himself; "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to *give* his life a ransom for many." And again; "I lay down my life of *myself*, no man taketh it from me." And so the apostle; "Our Lord Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins." But in another place he says; "Him God hath set forth to be a propitiation by his blood."[1] This shews that there was a mutual agreement or covenant between the Father and the Son with regard to man's redemption. Here the act is ascribed to the former, because Christ is spoken of as a servant.

V. 10. "*He shall see his seed.*" The church of God, or all true believers, are the seed of Christ; they are, that is, the fruit of his death and passion. And did he not see this fruit in abundance as soon as he had made

[1] Matt. xx. 28. John x. 18. Gal. i. 4. Rom. iii. 25.

his soul an offering for sin? In a few days after his ascension the number of disciples was multiplied from a hundred and twenty to five thousand; shortly afterwards there were many *myriads* who believed, in Jerusalem alone; and ere the first century had elapsed, the gospel had been preached throughout the Roman empire, and converts were found in every part.[1]

"*He shall prolong his days.*" The subject of this prophecy was to be cut *off from the land of the living*, to make *his soul*, or *life*, an offering for sin, and to be laid in the receptacle of the dead; yet here it is declared, he shall *prolong his days*: what can this mean, but that he shall rise from the grave and live again for ever? See Rev. i. 18.

"*The purpose of Jehovah*" was the salvation of sinners, and the establishment of his kingdom upon earth; or the formation of a holy church from among man's fallen race. This was his purpose from eternity, Eph. i. This work Christ undertook and accomplished; "I have finished, said he, the work which thou gavest me to do." John xvii. 4.

V. 11. Here the eternal Father takes up the discourse, and confirms the preceding declarations of the church. "*He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.*" There is a passage very similar to this in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Looking unto Jesus, who for the *joy that was set before him*, endured the cross, despising the shame."[2] In how beautiful a light do these passages present the Redeemer to our view? What was it satisfied him for his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion? What did he consider as a sufficient recompence for leaving the glory of his heavenly Father to be made like one of us? What was

[1] Acts iv. 4. xxi. 20. Col. i. 6. [2] Heb. xii. 2.

this *joy* set before him, for which he suffered such things? It was, the beholding some from the fallen, sinful race of man, brought from a state of condemnation and death, into one of acceptance, glory, and happiness. It was the redemption of helpless and guilty sinners from everlasting death and misery. This was the joy with which the mind of the Redeemer was satisfied. It was not any addition to his own personal glory, for that was impossible; but the communication of happiness to others: thus exemplifying in himself the truth of his own declaration, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."[1]

"*By the knowledge of himself,*" &c. It is by the knowledge of Christ in his nature and offices, as the eternal Son of God manifest in the flesh, as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and as our mediator and intercessor, that we are pardoned and justified in the sight of God; this, therefore, is the import of this declaration. Compare Rom. v. 1. Philip. iii. 8.

V. 12. "*Therefore I will appoint him a portion among the mighty.*" These words can only be interpreted as referring to that spiritual victory over sin, death, and hell, which Christ obtained by his obedience and sufferings. "By his cross, says the apostle, he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Col. ii. 15. Compare chap. xlix. 24, and John xii. 31. In order to see the propriety of dividing the chapter into portions, and of assigning those portions to different speakers, the reader will do well to read all those that are ascribed to Jehovah, and all those that are ascribed to the church, consecutively, each by themselves.

[1] Acts xx. 35.

REMARKS.

The prophecy contained in this section is too important to be passed over without more particular notice. It not only affords the most unanswerable argument that can be produced, in reply to the cavils of infidels, for the truth of Christianity, but it also embraces all the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; it is, in fact, a prophetical epitome of Christianity, and ought to be familiar to every one who professes himself a disciple of Christ, as it will enable him to give a satisfactory "reason to every one that asketh him of the hope that is in him."

Surely no one can read this prophecy attentively without being convinced of its divine inspiration. Let the following considerations be carefully weighed.

First, It is beyond all controversy certain, that this portion of the book of the prophet Isaiah was written before the coming of Christ. This may be shewn almost to mathematical demonstration. For the Jews, who deny the application we make of it, and are much perplexed to answer the arguments it furnishes against them, have it amongst those writings which they have received by regular tradition from their ancestors; and it is found in the translation of the Hebrew sacred scriptures into Greek, which was made more than two hundred years before the Christian era. There cannot, therefore, be the least doubt that the prophecy was written previously to the birth of Christ. This being admitted, consider,

Secondly, The impossibility of giving any satisfactory explanation of the language employed, except according to the Christian scheme of interpretation.

This is shewn by the absurd and unmeaning expositions of the Jewish Rabbis, most of whom affirm, that the Jews themselves, and their present persecutions and sufferings, are the subject of the prophecy. So forced and unnatural an interpretation needs not to be refuted; it only shews the difficulties into which they are driven.

Thirdly. Let the minuteness and clearness with which every circumstance attending the ministry of Christ, his sufferings, death and burial are predicted; and the exact accomplishment of every particular in Jesus of Nazareth, be considered. Whoever carefully reflects upon all these things must come to one or other of the following conclusions; either,

1st. That the prophecy was written after the events had taken place to which we refer it; or,

2ndly. That being written without any meaning, as it were at random, by Isaiah, it happened to suit those events; or,

3rdly. That it was indeed penned by inspiration from God. The first of these suppositions has been shewn to be impossible; the second is manifestly absurd and monstrous; the third therefore must be true; and if so, what a train of solemn, and to the infidel and mere nominal Christian, *fearful* consequences does this conclusion bring along with it? May such persons, if any should chance to cast their eyes upon these remarks, be led seriously to think of the danger they are in, and earnestly to seek for salvation from that Saviour who is here revealed.

With regard to the *doctrines* contained in this section, as already remarked, they are numerous and important, embracing the whole gospel system. I shall however only notice one, as being that which is the most prominent, and upon which the whole of the Christian

revelation is founded, I mean, the doctrine of the atonement, or of the propitiatory nature of the obedience and sufferings of Christ. There is nothing in Christianity which appears more incomprehensible, and even unreasonable, to the natural mind, than this. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish *foolishness*." [1] Hence many who profess to receive the Bible as a divine revelation, but who will believe only what accords with their own preconceived ideas of what they consider just and reasonable, reject the doctrine of the atonement altogether, and maintain that it is not a part of the gospel,. Upon this subject, so important, I would offer a few observations.

First of all it may be proper to explain the meaning of the doctrine expressed in the words, *atonement*, *propitiation*, &c. When we say then that Christ's sufferings were *atoning* sufferings, we mean, I conceive, simply that what he endured he endured in our stead. Or, more fully, that he actually bore the punishment which our sins justly deserved, so that in him suffering the Father beheld the whole redeemed church; he being their representative and substitute, and they in consequence, being discharged from all liability to that punishment their sins had incurred. Just as if a man should lay his head upon the block for another, and he by this means escape death. Such is the doctrine:—That it is contained in the portion of Scripture we are considering, who can doubt? Can it be expressed in words more clearly than in the fifth and tenth verses of the fifty third chapter? And is not the same doctrine as plainly taught in the New Testament? Besides the passages already referred to in the notes, how explicit is the declaration of St. Peter? "Who

[1] 1 Cor. i. 18.

his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree,—by whose stripes ye were healed."[1] Is not, in fact, the doctrine stated in all the Gospels and in all the Epistles? How then can any persons who admit their divine authenticity affirm that Christ suffered and died, *only* to set us an example and to confirm the truth of his doctrine? Yet such there are. And why do they thus deny the reality of Christ's atonement? Because, say they, it is contrary to reason, and furnishes infidels with one of the strongest objections against the truth of Christianity. And shall we then give up the doctrine merely on this ground? That it agrees not with our imperfect ideas concerning justice, that God should allow the innocent to suffer for the guilty, and punish our sins in the person of his Son, must be admitted by every Christian; but this I should say, so far from being an argument against the divine origin of the Gospel, affords a strong one in its favour. For if the doctrine be contrary to those sentiments which pervade the mass of mankind, how shall we account for its having been taught by so many; unless we suppose it to have originated with God himself? However it is vain to argue this point with those who do not feel that they have deserved punishment, and need *one that is mightier than they* to bear their sins. It is the sick, not the whole, who seek a physician. The invitations and promises of our divine Redeemer are addressed to those only who are weary and *heavy laden*. If we feel ourselves of this number he *will bear our griefs and carry our sorrows*.

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 24. See also 2 Cor. v. 21.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LII. 7—12.

(1) Bishop Lowth would read כל צפיך "all thy watchmen," instead of קול צפיך "the voice of thy watchmen;" the mistake he conjectures might have arisen from the similitude in sound between the two letters כ and ק

(2) Heb. "*Eye to eye;*" i. e. clearly, distinctly.

(3) לא תצאו "*Ye may not go forth.*" This being a command rather than a prophecy, should be translated in the imperative, and not in the future.

(4) חפזון is the word used Exod. xii. 11, in describing the manner in which the Israelites would go out of Egypt, to which event there is an evident allusion in this place. "Ye shall not go out as your forefathers did from Egypt, in haste and confusion."

(5) ישכיל This verb signifies, "*to have understanding, to be wise;*" and hence also, "*to act prudently, to prosper;*" because prosperity is the result of wise conduct. As the three expressions which follow relate rather to the external glory of the Messiah than to his internal qualities, I have given it here the latter signification. Compare Gen. iii. 6. 1 Sam. xviii. 5, 14. Psalm xiv. 2.

(6) ירום ונשא וגבה There is a climax here in these words, each expressing a higher degree of exaltation than the other. The first signifies, to be set upright; the second, to be raised from the ground; the third to be lifted up very high.

(7) שממו The primitive meaning of the root is, "*to be desolate;*" hence it comes to signify, "*to regard with stupid astonishment;*" because the mind of a person in such circumstances is vacant, empty of thought and judgment. Sept. ἐκστήσονται. Vide Jer. iv. 9.

(8) Two ancient MSS. Syr. Chald. and Vulg. read עליו instead of עליך. Bishop Lowth.

(9) משחת is rather the participle in Hophal than an adjective; and the prefix מ therefore does not here signify comparison, but expresses

the instrument by which the act intended by the verb is performed. Sept. *αδεξησει απο των ανθρωπων.*

(10) The received reading is יזה "*he shall sprinkle;*" which is commonly interpreted of Christ's taking away sin by the sprinkling of his blood. But although this is a scriptural expression, and contains an undoubted truth, yet here it suits not with the context. For there is clearly an antithesis between the clause, "*In as much as many looked with astonishment upon him,*" and this we are considering; but what antithesis is there between many *beholding* Jesus with astonishment, and his *sprinkling* them with his blood? Another objection to the usual reading and translation is, that יזה requires על or אל after it, before the thing sprinkled upon. I have therefore adopted the alteration proposed by several learned men, and approved by Bishop Lowth, who would read יזוּ instead of יזה,—חזה means "*to regard with* ADMIRATION *and* APPROBATION," (See Psalm ii. 7. xvii. 15. xxvii. 4.) and is properly opposed to ישמכמו. Sept. *θαυμασονται.*

(11) אשר לא נסר In the version of this passage I have followed the Septuagint, as quoted by St. Paul, Rom. xv. 21: for he would hardly have brought it forward in confirmation of a doctrine most offensive to the Jews, viz. that the gospel ought to be preached to the Gentiles, unless it had been understood by them in the sense in which he quoted it, instead of as in our Bibles. Indeed the translation of the Septuagint is nearest the Hebrew. The construction of the words may be thus shewn; אשר לתם *they to whom,* לא נסר *he was not made known.* So Jer. viii. 2. אשר תשתחוו לתם *they to whom ye bowed down.*

CHAP. LIII.

(1) Heb. *Before him;* meaning the Jewish people. They are frequently spoken of in the singular number. See chap. xlii. 25.

(2) ונרהוהו "*That we should regard him.*" The ו in this case, Vitringa observes, has the force of *ut* in Latin. Compare chap. xxvi. 2, and li. 12.

(3) כמסתר מנים Authorized version, "*We hid as it were our faces from him.*" This translation is manifestly incorrect, for כמסתר being in the singular, cannot mean, "*we* hid as it were." I have given Bishop Lowth's rendering. Some MSS. read וכמסתירי פנינו.

(') The Hebrew word חלי means rather *sickness* or *infirmity*, than *grief*; (Matt. viii. 17.) but the latter word is so familiar to our ears in this place, that I was unwilling to alter it.

(') Heb. "*We have every man looked to his own path.*"

(") Bp. Lowth gives quite a different sense to these words. He translates them; "It was exacted, and he was made answerable." The Hebrew will certainly bear this, but it does not seem to me the most natural rendering.

(") נאלמה, in the feminine, refers to רחל,—and יפתח, masculine, to שה; so that the two lines might be translated thus:

"As a lamb when led to the slaughter, openeth not its mouth,
"And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb."

(') This is an obscure passage, and has been rendered many different ways. Instead of מעצר we ought perhaps to read מעזר; such a mistake might easily occur from the similarity in the sound of the two letters צ and ז. However, this is only conjecture. The version of the seventy is;—"Εν τη ταπεινωσει η κρισις αυτου ηρθη;" the Hebrew therefore in their copies must have been very unlike what it is in ours. The sense however is much the same. "*In his humiliation was his judgment taken away,*" means, he was treated so ignominiously and unjustly, that a fair trial was not allowed him. See Acts viii. 32.

(') דורו, "*his way of life.*" So in Psalm xxiv. 6. "This is the generation (דור, character, way of life) of them that seek thee." Such indeed is the general meaning of the word—Gen. vi. 9.

(") The Sept. read לבות εις θανατον. The passage is likewise so quoted by Origen, who urged it as an argument against the Jews to shew that the prophecy could not refer to them as a nation, as they pretended, but must relate to some individual. Hence Dr. Kennicott argues that the Hebrew text at that time had לבות, or the Jews would not have been perplexed by his argument.—Bp. Lowth, in loco.

(") "*His tomb.*" "Among the various opinions which have been given on this passage, I have no doubt in giving my assent to that which makes the ב in במותיו radical, and renders it, *excelsa sua.* This is mentioned by Aben Ezra as received by some in his time; and has been long since approved by many learned Christian interpreters." Bp. Lowth.

Dr. Jubb observes that במותיו is not formed from במות, the plural of במה, the feminine noun; but from במותים, the plural of a masculine noun, במות.

(12) Perhaps we ought to read ישׂים instead תשׂים. Sept. δωται.

(13) The הוא here seems emphatic, and I am inclined to think the clause is connected with verse 10, and should be assigned to the church, thus;

"The purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand,
And even he shall bear the sins of many, and make intercession for transgressors."

SECT. 49. CHAP. LIV.

In the following chapter the prophet, throughout, speaks in the name of Jehovah, and predicts the excellent effects which would result to the church in consequence of the sufferings and exaltation of the Messiah, foretold in the preceding. First, the great increase in the *number* of its *spiritual* members, the real children of God, is intimated, the church being called upon to prepare for their reception, verse 1—3; secondly, the privileges and blessings of the Christian church, and the holy character of its members, are represented in a variety of beautiful and expressive images, verses 4—14; lastly, its safety, and final triumph over all opponents are promised, verses 15—17.

ISAIAH, Sect. 49. Chap. LIV. 1—5.

1. Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear;
   Break forth into singing, and shout for joy, thou that travailedst not;
   For more are the children of the desolate, than of the married wife,
   Saith Jehovah.
2. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them extend the curtains of thine habitations;
   Spare not; lengthen thy cords, and make firm thy stakes:
3. For thou shalt spread forth on the right hand, and on the left,
   And thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and shall inhabit the desolate cities.
4. Fear not, for thou shalt not be put to shame;
   Blush not, for thou shalt not be confounded:
   For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,
   And the reproach of thy widowhood, thou shalt remember no more.
5. For thy husband is thy maker, Jehovah God of Hosts is his name,
   And thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth is he called.

6. For as a woman forsaken, and grieved in spirit,
hath Jehovah called thee;
And as a wife taken in youth, although thou
wast despised, saith thy God.
7. In a little (1) wrath, I forsook thee, but with
great mercies will I gather thee;
8. In short-lived (2) anger I hid my face from
thee for a moment, but with everlasting kind-
ness will I pity thee,
Saith thy Redeemer, Jehovah.
9. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me;
As I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall
not again come over the earth,
So have I sworn that I will not be wroth with
thee, nor rebuke thee.
10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills
shall be removed;
But my mercy shall not depart from thee, nor
my covenant of peace be removed;
Saith Jehovah, that hath compassion upon thee.
11. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not
comforted;
Behold, I lay (3) rubies for thy stones, and thy
foundations, I lay with sapphires;
12. And I will make thy windows (4) of agate, and
thy gates of carbuncles;
And all thy outer walls of precious stones.
13. And all thy children shall be taught by Jehovah,
And great shall be the peace of thy children.
14. In righteousness shalt thou be built up;

Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear it,
And from terror, for it shall not come near thee.
15. Behold, they shall gather together, (5) but not by me;
Whosoever is gathered against thee, shall come over to thee.
16. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire;
And who bringeth forth instruments for his work:
And I also have created the destroyer to work destruction.
17. No weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper;
And every tongue that shall rise up against thee in judgment, thou shalt convict.
This is the inheritance of the servants of Jehovah,
And their righteousness is from me, saith Jehovah.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LIV. 1—3.

V. 1—3. The subject of these verses is not either the Jewish, or the Gentile church, in particular, as they are distinguished from each other, but the church of God considered *abstractedly*, under the law and under the gospel. Under the law, that is, from Moses to Christ, the church is regarded as a *married wife*, and enjoying all the privileges of that situation. She had a magnificent temple, the *house* of Jehovah, in which he promised his name should dwell; she had a High Priest, his minister and representative; she had divinely inspired prophets to instruct and guide her. But with all these advantages she was *barren*, she brought forth few or no children; the number at least of true worshippers of Jehovah in her was so small, compared with the bulk of the Jewish nation, that they were hardly to be reckoned anything. After the abolition of the law, the destruction of the temple, and the consequent loss of all those external services and distinctions which the church, under the Mosaic economy, possessed, she is considered as *desolate;* resembling a woman who has lost her husband's protection and guidance. Yet now, under these apparently untoward circumstances, the children of the church, the number of true believers, was greatly to exceed the number of those in her former, outwardly, more prosperous state. Therefore she is called upon to exult and

rejoice, and to make preparations for the reception of her numerous progeny.

"*Enlarge the place of thy tent,*" &c. The figure of a woman dwelling with her family in a tent, is admirably adapted to represent the state of the church in this world, where it is but a sojourner, having *no continuing city*, nor settled habitation. (See Heb. xi. 9.) Such being the metaphor employed, the reason why she is directed to *enlarge the space of her tent*, in consequence of the increase which was about to take place in the number of her children, is very obvious. But why, *make firm thy stakes?* This may perhaps intimate the *durability* of the ordinances and services of the Christian Church, which, unlike those of the Jewish Church, would endure as long as the world.[1]

"*The desolate cities.*" i. e. the countries of the Gentiles, which had hitherto been uninhabited by any of the children of God. So numerous would be the offspring of the church, that a *tent* would no longer be able to contain them, and they would go forth to people desolate cities.

It is scarcely necessary to shew the fulfilment of this prediction. Every one must be aware of the astonishing increase of the church, after the abolition of the Mosaic ritual. There were probably more real believers added to it during the Apostolic age alone, than during the whole previous period from Moses to Christ.

[1] Those of my readers who have not seen a large tent, such as is used in Eastern countries, may perhaps not be sorry to read a brief description of one, which may enable them to form a better idea of the above imagery. It consists then of a large canopy of cloth, supported in the centre by one or two poles, and stretched out by means of long cords, which are fastened to the ground with stakes or rather wooden pegs; the sides of the tent under the canopy being closed in by *curtains*, or, as they are usually called *walls*, the height of which is from five to six feet; these are fastened to the canopy by loops or taches.

As illustrative, and confirmatory of the foregoing interpretation, the reader will do well to compare, Hosea iii. and Rom. vii. 1—6.

V. 4, 5. "*The shame of thy youth*" denotes not only the evils which the Church suffered in its infancy in Egypt, and under the Judges, but also her barrenness of true believers under the law, before mentioned. For, as has been already remarked, (chap. iv. 1.) it was considered a thing *to be ashamed of* among the Jews, for a young married woman not to have children. *The reproach of thy widowhood* likewise, alludes, I conceive, rather to the state of the church in the interval between the full establishment of the true religion among the Gentiles, and the casting off of the Jews, during which time it might be considered in a state of widowhood, than to the period of the captivity of the Jewish Church in Babylon, as Vitringa and many other commentators interpret it.

"*Thy husband is thy maker.*" The relation which exists between husband and wife, is the nearest and closest of all human ties. They two in fact are one. At least according to the original appointment of God, so it should be. And even in our present fallen condition the connection partakes in some measure of the character which it had in the beginning. The wife is still exclusively dependent upon her husband, and, in the eye of the law, has no will, no power, no property, of her own, but is bound to resign all to him, and to look to him alone for support:—The husband, on the other hand, is bound to regard his wife as part of himself, and to provide for, protect and cherish her, as one with him. So then it is with God and the church; and this is the reason why the relation which exists between them is so often represented in Scripture by the marriage contract. Let the reader

compare this passage in Isaiah with the following in the New Testament. John iii. 29. Rom. vii. 4. Ephes. v. 22—33. In all these places he will find Christ expressly declared to be the Husband or Bridegroom of the Church. But it said thy Husband is thy MAKER, JEHOVAH. What then is the inference? Surely that one and the same person is spoken of by Isaiah and the Apostles, and consequently that Jesus Christ is Jehovah. These coincidences afford the strongest and most unanswerable arguments for the divinity of our adorable Redeemer; far more so than any subtle and laboured reasonings upon the subject.

V. 6—8. When God glorified his church by the accession of numerous members both from amongst Jews and Gentiles, he acted towards her, as if a husband should take into his favour again a wife whom he had married *in her youth*, but who, on account of her barrenness, had been cast off by him and neglected. The particular period referred to in the expressions; "*In a little wrath I forsook thee*," &c." must be the period of the Church's widowhood, mentioned in verse 4; namely, the interval between the casting off of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles; the *commencement* of which may be dated perhaps from Malachi, the last of the prophets.

This passage plainly shews that the Jewish *national* church specifically, cannot be the subject of the prophecy; for *that* has certainly been forsaken by Jehovah for nearly eighteen hundred years, a period too long to be called a *moment*, in any sense of the word. The church, therefore, viewed abstractedly, is meant; and the blessings promised, are the blessings of the gospel, conveyed through Christ.—Compare John xiv. 16.

V. 9, 10. The promise God made to Noah was, that he would not again destroy the inhabitants of the earth,

and its productions, by a flood—Gen. viii. 20. And he now declares, that the promises of good he had just made to the church, were equally certain and immutable with that he had given to Noah. For although it were easy for him to remove the mountains and hills from their places, yet was it not possible that his love should ever fail, or his covenant be broken.

Perhaps *mountains* and *hills*, may be put figuratively for the enemies of the Church.

"*Covenant of peace.*" This means the covenant by which God promises to be reconciled to sinners.—Compare chap. xlii. 6. lv. 3. Ephes. ii. 12.

V. 11, 12. Here the metaphor is changed, and the Church is addressed, not as a woman but as a *city*, the walls of which, having been shaken by earthquakes and tempests, had fallen to decay. Such was the state of the church some time previous to, and at the period of our Lord's appearing. Assaulted by many enemies from without, and distracted by dissensions within, it seemed to be shaken from its very foundations, and to be tumbling into ruins. In these circumstances Jehovah promises to restore and beautify it. "*Behold I lay rubies for thy stones,*" &c. To attempt a particular application of this language, is unnecessary. Such minute expositions, (if they deserve the name) of the metaphors of Scripture may be curious and amusing, but they seldom or ever tend to any profit. The general import in these cases is all that need be sought for. In the passage before us this is sufficiently clear. The Church being addressed symbolically as a city, the *stones* of that city must necessarily be the *members* of the Church. The import therefore of the promise is, that, at the time referred to, the Church should be constituted of holy members, adorned and beautified with all the graces of the Holy Spirit; and further,

that it would be protected and defended from all the assaults of its spiritual enemies. Thus St. Paul describes the Church of Christ as "*built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,*" (Ephes. ii. 20.) The Holy Spirit has also employed the same metaphors in describing the future glory of the Church, Rev. xxi. 19. Under the apostles, the state of the the Christian Church answered somewhat to this description; but we may hope that the time is not far distant when, in the most unrestricted sense, these promises will be fulfilled.

V. 13. "*All thy children shall be taught by Jehovah.*" Here is an interesting and important promise. Our Lord quotes these words to shew the need there is of divine illumination, to enable us to understand and receive the gospel. (John vi. 45.) He himself makes a similar promise (chap. xvi. 13.) Has the reader been taught by Jehovah? Does he seek to be enlightened by that Spirit which alone can preserve him from error, and guide him into all truth?

V. 14. "*In righteousness shalt thou be built up.*" Righteousness here means *holiness* in its largest sense; *truth, purity, love,* &c. These form the strength and beauty of the church; and in proportion as they are found among its members, is its stability.

"*Thou shalt be far from oppression.*" Compared with its condition under the heathen Roman Emperors, the Church after the accession of Constantine, may be said to have been, *far from oppression.* But who does not see that this, and the other promises contained in this chapter, have reference to what is yet future?

V. 15. Although Jehovah promised security to his Church, yet would it not be altogether free from the attacks of its enemies. These would *gather together*

for its destruction, but not *from Jehovah*, not, that is, with his will and consent; and therefore their attempts would prove abortive; and they would either be destroyed, or come over to the church. This must be the meaning of the passage if the common rendering be correct. The original however is very obscure. See Crit. Note 6.

V. 16, 17. These words suggest a strong ground of consolation to the Church. Jehovah is the creator of all things. He makes the smith who forms the weapons of war, and he creates those conquerors who with them destroy mankind. Hence whatever designs may be formed against the church, and however powerful its enemies, yet they are but the creatures of God, and therefore their machinations can never be successful. Has not this promise been already accomplished in numberless instances? First, the Priests and Sanhedrim of the Jews conspired the destruction of the infant Church. Then the Roman Emperors in a series of ten persecutions, endeavoured to extirpate the followers of Christ. Scarcely had these ceased, and the Empire become nominally Christian, ere Julian, in a more subtle manner, by every art in short that human wisdom could suggest, and hatred to Christianity could prompt, attempted the same thing. The later attacks of infidel philosophers and demagogues upon the church, need not be enlarged upon. And what has been the result of all these puny efforts of impious men? Does not the Church still exist? Does it not daily gather strength? Have *any of the weapons formed against it* prospered?

"*Every tongue that shall rise up against thee,*" &c. This implies the *innocency* of the Church, considered as a body. All its adversaries will at length be put to silence, and Jehovah will pronounce it *guiltless*, in the presence of the assembled universe.

Is it not probable that St. Paul had these words in his mind when he asked; "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? God that justifieth?[1] Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died?" (Rom. viii. 33.) If so, the justification of every believer from the accusations of Satan, is here alluded to. Compare Rev. xii. 10.

REMARKS.

"THY *husband is thy maker.*" This remarkable declaration must not pass without further notice. Throughout the Bible the union between the Redeemer and his Church, is thus represented. (See the references in the Explanatory Notes.) The statement of St. Paul, however, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is deserving of especial attention. "Husbands," he says, "love your wives, even as Christ also loved his church, and gave himself for it:—For we are members of his flesh and of his bones; For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and his church," chap. v. 25, &c. Does this mean merely that Christ watches over and protects his church? Does it not imply that there is a reciprocal feeling between them? Whilst Christ loves his people, and bears them, like the High Priest, upon his breast, and in his heart, will they not also love him? Will not the desire of their souls be towards him? and will they not regard him with the affection and love of a tender wife? What then shall we say to those, who would exclude the exercise of the affections in religion?

[1] That this sentence should be read as an interrogation is, I think evident, from its similarity to the beginning of verse 35.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LIV.

(1) *A little wrath*," is put in opposition to *great mercies*, this translation therefore seems preferable to the authorized rendering, *a small moment*. "So the Chaldee and Syriac, either reading, רגז for רגע: or understanding the latter word, as meaning the same as the former." Bp. Lowth.

(2) שצף, occurs only in this place; but being opposed to עולם, *everlasting*, it evidently means, of *short* duration.

(2) בפוך. Authorized version. "*With fair colours.*"—Bp. Lowth. "*In cement of vermillion.*" But here this word seems rather to be the name of a precious stone, to answer to כפירים.—1 Chron. xxix. 2.

(1) שמשתיך. Sept. επαλξεις, *bulwarks*.

(3) הן גור יגור. The meaning of this passage is very doubtful; owing, principally, to the ambiguity of the verb גור, which may signify either, to *assemble together*, *to sojourn*, or *to fear*. The Sept. version is; "Ιδοὺ προσελυτοι προσελευσονται σοι δι' εμε, και παροικησουσι σοι, και επι σε καταφευξονται."

There is probably some error in the text, which cannot now be rectified.—"*Shall come over to thee*," is Bp. Lowth's rendering of עליך יפול, who refers to Jeremiah xxxvii. 13.

SECT. 50. CHAP. LV.

THE following section contains another prophecy of the interlocutory kind. It begins with an address from the Messiah, who invites all who may be *desirous* of them, to come and receive freely the blessings of the Gospel covenant, verse 1—3; Jehovah next speaks, and declares the offices of Messiah, and the conversion of the Gentiles, verse 4, 5; the ministers of the Gospel then take up the discourse, and encourage even those who had most deeply sinned, to turn to Jehovah and receive pardon, verse 6—9; in the next verses Jehovah again speaks, and shews the efficacy of his word, verse 10, 11;—the chapter concludes with a figurative representation of the blessedness of those who are delivered from the bondage of sin by faith in Christ, and of the excellent effects produced among the Gentiles by the gospel, verse 12, 13.

ISAIAH: Sect. 50. Chap. LV. 1—5.

MESSIAH.

1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
   Even he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat:
   Yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.
2. Why spend ye [1] money for that which is not bread?
   And your substance [2] for that which satisfieth not?
   Hearken attentively to me, and eat ye that which is good,
   And let your soul delight itself in fatness. [3]
3. Incline your ear, and come unto me,
   Hear, and your soul shall live;
   And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
   Even the sure mercies [4] of David.

JEHOVAH.

4. Behold, I have appointed him as a witness to the people,
   As a prince, and lawgiver to the people.
5. Behold, thou shalt call nations that thou knewest not,

And nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee,
Because of Jehovah thy God,
And of the Holy One of Israel, for he hath made thee glorious.

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

6. Seek ye Jehovah, while he may be found,
Call ye upon him, while he is near;
7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,
And let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him;
And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
8. For your thoughts are not my thoughts, nor your ways my ways,
Saith Jehovah.
9. For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

JEHOVAH.

10. For as the rain and the snow descend from the heavens,
And return not thither, until (5) they have watered the earth;
And made it to bring forth, and caused its produce to spring up,
That it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;
11. So shall my word be which goeth out of my mouth:
It shall not return unto me void;

Until it hath performed that which I have willed;
And hath accomplished (6) the purpose for which
I sent it.

MESSIAH.

12. For ye shall go forth with joy, and with peace
shall ye be brought;
The mountains and hills shall break forth before
you into singing,
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
13. Instead of the bramble, shall come up the fir tree,
Instead of the brier, shall spring up the myrtle.
And it shall be unto Jehovah for a name,
An everlasting token, which shall not be destroyed.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LV. 1.

V. 1. The speaker in this and the two next verses, is the Messiah, who is now introduced, after having finished the work of redemption: (chap. liii.) as ready and able to impart the blessings of the gospel covenant freely to all who might be willing to receive them.

These blessings are figuratively represented by the terms, *water*, *wine*, and *milk;* and those who are invited to partake of them are the *thirsty*, and such as *have no money*. And what can be more appropriate than the use of these images in this place? As before observed, I am not fond of too minute an application of scripture metaphors, but here, each one seems to have a peculiar force and meaning. For as water *refreshes*, wine *strengthens*, and milk *nourishes* the bodily system; so does Christ by his Spirit and his word, refresh, invigorate, and sanctify the soul. The assurances he gives of pardon and acceptance, impart joy and peace; his promises and the aids of his Spirit, supply energy and strength for the carrying on of that spiritual warfare in which the Christian is engaged; and the holy precepts of his word, accompanied by the sanctifying influences of the same Spirit, cause the believer daily to grow in grace and holiness.

Each of these figurative terms then has an appropriate application. And so with regard to the persons addressed; the *thirsty*, and such as *have no money*.

The first epithet implies an *earnest desire* for spiritual blessings, pardon, sanctification, salvation, &c.; the second, a sense of *demerit*, of utter unworthiness in themselves of those blessings after which they who have this spiritual thirst, ardently pant. They have *no money*. No good works, that is, no merits to offer in exchange for the promised mercies. These therefore are offered freely; *without money*, &c. There is a peculiar emphasis in the original, which can scarcely be conveyed in a translation. It implies not only that the promised blessings *are* to be had *without* money, &c.; but that they *cannot* be had with it; "*not* for money nor for price." Compare Matt. xi. 28. John vii. 37.

V. 2. "*Why spend ye money*," &c. The words, *money*, *substance*, and *bread*, in this place, like the wine and milk in the preceding verse, must have a figurative meaning. This remonstrance, therefore, is not addressed to those who foolishly seek only for the enjoyments of this world whilst they are entirely regardless of better things, as might at first strike the mind of the reader; but rather to *self-righteous persons*, such as the Pharisees among the Jews, and devotees of all religions, who think by fastings, and other austerities, called here, their *money* and *substance*, to bring peace to their souls, and to merit eternal happiness. These are said to spend their money for that *which is not bread*, and their substance for that *which satisfieth not*, because, after they have done all, they find themselves as far from peace as ever, their *inward* part remaining still unsanctified, and the power of sin consequently still continuing, from which they are unable to deliver themselves. Luther is a striking and interesting example of the truth of this representation, who acknowledges, "that from the very beginning of his

monastic life he was constantly sad and dejected; being unable to give peace to his mind."[1] Such persons are invited to listen to Christ, and by faith in his atonement and righteousness, to accept that peace and joy, which they in vain seek for by their mortifications, and fancied good works.

"*Eat ye that which is good,*" &c. See chap. xxv. 6, and notes. Our Lord uses the same figure to express believing on him: John vi. 53.

V. 3. "*Your soul shall live.*" The soul, or mind, of man is by nature "dead in trespasses and sins, being alienated from the life of God."[2] But whoever sincerely believes in Christ will surely receive life to his soul. Not only obtain eternal life hereafter, but be quickened into spiritual life in this world: that is, be enabled to exercise all the functions of a soul spiritually alive. See the notes on chap. xxxv. 5, 6. If the reader will compare these invitations and promises with the whole of the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, he will have a better understanding of them than any commentary can give.

"*An everlasting covenant.*" The covenant of the gospel may be called *everlasting* with reference both to the past, and to the future. With reference to the past, it is an everlasting covenant, because the terms of it were settled from eternity, between the parties concerned in making it.

This, I think we may infer from John xvii. 5, 6. and 2 Tim. i. 9. The first of these, especially, seems clearly to imply that there was a sort of mutual compact between the Father and the Son, by which the latter was to receive a certain portion of mankind, as a recompense for his incarnation and sufferings;

[1] Milner's Church History, vol. iv. p. 323. [2] Ephes. ii. 1.

"And now, O Father, he says, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, before the *world was*. I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me."[1] Here there seems a plain reference to an eternal covenant. The subject, however, is one upon which it becomes us to write and speak with reverence, and on which we must take care not to go beyond the express declarations of scripture.

With relation to the future, the gospel covenant is everlasting, in that the benefits conferred by it, last for ever.

"*The sure mercies of David.*" That is, the mercies promised to David; which were to flow to the church through Christ, the son of David as *pertaining to the flesh*, or, with respect to his human nature. Rom. i. 3. These are called *sure*, or faithful, because they rest upon the promise of God, and nothing can deprive believers of them. Compare Psalm lxxxix. and Gal. iii. 17, 18.

V. 4. Here God the Father declares further the offices of the Redeemer. He had appointed him to be a *witness*, to the people, a *prince*, and a *lawgiver*,—and Christ is all these. First. He is a *witness*. Which means, I imagine, that he testified truly concerning God and man. Thus he affirms, concerning himself, "We speak that we do know, and *testify* that we have

[1] Zech. vi. 13, has also often been urged as a proof of an eternal covenant between the Father and the Son. But do not the words, "*and the covenant of peace shall be between them both*," refer simply to the union of the kingly and priestly offices in Christ, which had been just before mentioned, without any allusion to the persons of the Trinity?

seen;" and again, "The world hateth me, because I *testify* of it, that its works are evil."[1]

Secondly. He is a *prince*. The original word means, one who goes before another, and leads the way. So Christ is not only our great *exemplar*, whose holy life we are to imitate; but he is also our *precursor*, who has gone before to prepare a place for us. John xiv. 3. Heb. vi. 20.

Thirdly. He is a *lawgiver*. He it is whose laws and precepts, the whole church is bound to obey; according to the command of his heavenly Father; "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear (or obey) ye him."[2]

V. 5. Vitringa thinks these words are addressed to the church. But, besides that, the verbs and pronouns in the original are masculine, and the church is usually addressed in the feminine gender; the exact correspondence between this declaration and chap. xlix. 5, 6, and lii. 14, shews, in my opinion, that it is Messiah, and not the church, to whom Jehovah speaks. In those passages, as well as in this, the calling of the Gentiles is very plainly foretold.

V. 6, 7. These verses scarcely need any comment. They contain a purely evangelical exhortation, addressed to sinners in general, and inviting them to repent, and seek Jehovah while he may be found, with the promise of free forgiveness upon their so doing. Does any one ask more precisely what is meant by the expression, "*while he may he found?*" I answer; the only time when God may certainly be found, is, when the sinner hears the invitations of the gospel, and feels a disposition to obey them. The time when God may be found is to-day—now—the present moment. He alone knows how

[1] John iii. 11: vii. 7; see also chap. i. 18. [2] Matt. xvii. 5.

long that time may last. The difference between the meaning of the words *wicked*, and *unrighteous*, is, that the former signifies a man who has no regard to God in his actions,—an atheist: the latter a vicious man, one who commits unjust and immoral acts. Not that they are distinct characters: for the ungodly man is always unrighteous: and the unrighteous man must be ungodly. Now the *ways* of the wicked, are the principles upon which he conducts himself, namely, a studied neglect of the divine authority, and a regard only to his own inclinations. And the *thoughts* of the unrighteous, are those evil purposes which they who live without God are continually meditating. Such are ambitious, revengeful, covetous, sensual thoughts and designs; and all others that have for their object the gratification of the evil passions of our nature. These then, the wicked and the unrighteous are called upon to renounce, and to *return unto Jehovah, who will have mercy upon them*, &c.

This promise coming in, as it does, in the midst of a prophecy relative to Christ and his gospel, must undoubtedly be understood in an evangelical sense. Mercy and pardon, that is, are promised the sincere penitent upon the supposition that he exercises faith in the atoning sacrifice of that Saviour, whose character and office had been so clearly described in chap. liii. To suppose otherwise, as if pardon were offered gratuitously, without any satisfaction being made for sin, but in consequence of the mere act of the sinner's repentance, would be to contradict the whole tenor of the Bible. Compare Acts ii. 38. Heb. ix. 22.

V. 8. "*For your thoughts are not my thoughts,*" &c. This verse shews why it was necessary that the wicked should forsake his *ways* and the unrighteous man his *thoughts*, because, that is, they were not God's thoughts

and ways; because they were not such as he commanded and approved. Thus David calls those actions and dispositions which are pleasing to God, the *way* of truth, the way of thy precepts, the way of thy statutes, &c. (Psalm cxix.) Indeed throughout the Bible, the ways of God, mean his will and commandments.

V. 9. "*For the heavens are higher than the earth,*" &c. The "*for*" here, refers to the declaration in the sixth verse; "Seek ye Jehovah, while he may be found," &c. and gives the sinner encouragement to listen to, and obey the invitation. As if the prophet had written, "Seek ye Jehovah—for he will have mercy upon you; and he will abundantly pardon: *for* the heavens are higher than the earth; and so are his ways higher than your ways," &c. i. e. his mercy and compassion towards sinners, as much exceed what men exercise towards each other, as the heavens are raised in height above the earth. Men cherish enmity in their hearts to each other, are long in forgiving, and unwilling to be reconciled. But God forgives, the moment we turn to him and seek reconciliation. See Matt. xviii. Luke xv.

But it may be objected, that this interpretation gives a different sense to the words *thoughts* and *ways*, in this verse, from that which they had in the preceding. There they signified the will of God, his purposes and commands; but here, according to the above interpretation, they mean the manner in which God acts towards sinners. Certainly; but this is no objection to the interpretation. For the eighth verse shews the *quality* of men's thoughts and ways with regard to God, that they are unlike *his;* but the ninth verse shews the character of God's thoughts and ways towards men, which are as far above theirs towards

each other as the heavens are higher than the earth. Compare Psalm ciii. 11.

V. 10, 11. Jehovah again takes up the discourse from verse 5. He had there given an assurance to the anointed Saviour, that "he should call many nations which had not known him, and be made glorious in their eyes." The *instrument* by which this conversion of the Gentiles would be effected, and the certainty of its efficacy, are here spoken of. Namely, the word of God, proclaimed by Messiah, which would as surely accomplish the *purpose for which it was sent*, that is, the establishment of the true religion among the Gentiles, as the rain and the snow coming down from above, fertilize the earth, and render it capable of producing its fruits.

"*Until.*" The rain and the snow *do* return again to the skies from whence they descended, being again drawn up into the air by the sun, after they have watered the earth. Instead therefore of the authorized version, "*but* watereth the earth" we should read rather "*until* they *have* watered." See Critical Note.

This promise, although given primarily to the Messiah himself, is undoubtedly intended for the encouragement of all preachers of the gospel. And is it not indeed a consolatory thought that, however fruitless and vain all our efforts for the conversion of sinners may appear, yet the word of God faithfully declared, cannot, according to his promise, return unto him void? How long a time is it before the good effects of the rain and, more especially, of the snow, are at all visible;—may it not be thus also with the word of God in our mouths? See chap. lix. 21.

V. 12, 13. This is perhaps the only place in which there is any further recurrence to the return from Babylon, and here it is only glanced at. The speaker

in these verses is the same as in the beginning of the chapter, and the persons addressed are those who are supposed to have obeyed the invitation there given them. The blessings to themselves accompanying their deliverance, and the excellent effects which they would produce in the Gentile world by their teaching and example, are described by the most beautiful imagery. "A renovation of all things takes place, and the world, as it were, new created, breaks forth into singing."[1] Compare chap. lii. 12.

"*Instead of the bramble,*" &c. The change effected in the character and practices of the Gentiles by the preaching of the word, (compared before to the rain and the snow) is what is here intended. As if a country covered with brambles and briers, should suddenly be converted into a verdant landscape, adorned with the most beautiful and fragrant trees and shrubs; so would the superstition, the ignorance, the vice, and the wretchedness of the heathen, be converted into true religion, knowledge, holiness, and happiness. That such a change must always be effected where the gospel is really received into the heart, St. Paul teaches, Ephes. iv. 17.

"*It* shall be," &c. namely, the word proclaimed by Messiah, which is a perpetual testimony to the goodness, power, and mercy of Jehovah; and shall be to the end of the world. See chap. lix. 21. 1 Pet. i. 25.[2]

[1] Preface to Commentary on the Psalms, by Bishop Horne, p. lxiv. an admirable preface, and well worth the perusal.

[2] This chapter furnishes one of the most remarkable examples in the Prophet Isaiah, of what is termed introverted parallelism. The 8th verse answers to the 7th; the 9th to the 6th; the 10th and 11th, to the 4th and 5th; and the 12th and 13th, to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

REMARKS.

Can any one read this sublime and beautiful portion of the divine word, and still doubt whether the salvation of the sinner be wholly free and unmerited? or whether the blessings of the gospel are conferred upon us, without our having *previously* done any good works to deserve them? Are not pardon, peace, and righteousness, and all the graces of the Holy Spirit, promised, *without money and* without *price?* Are not all who *desire* them invited to come and freely partake of them? Are not the *wicked* and the *unrighteous* exhorted to return to God, with the assurance of pardon? How mistaken then are those who imagine that what they call good works, that is, mere acts of charity, and so on, will make a reparation for their sins, and *merit* the favour of God and eternal life. But they ask; "Are we not told that *the prayers and the* ALMS *of Cornelius went up as a memorial before God,* and that Peter was sent to instruct him in the way of salvation in consequence of them?"[1] In answer to this certainly *plausible* argument for the *merit* of good works, let it be observed: First, That there is not the smallest intimation in the history that Cornelius distributed his alms as a sort of cloak for his sins; under the idea, that the merit of his charities, would, if I may so speak, blind the eyes of the Almighty to his failings and his offences; which it is to be feared, is the secret motive that actuates many in the giving of money; nor,

Secondly, That he distributed them, supposing thereby to purchase to himself eternal life; or in fact from any other motive than pure benevolence; that is, love to God and love to his fellow creatures. And,

[1] Acts x. 4.

Thirdly. Let it be observed, that it is evident, although the general tenor of Cornelius's life was blameless, yet he had a clear and full conviction of his being a sinner, and of his need of a Saviour. Otherwise would he have received Peter with so much humility, and have embraced, at once, with joy the gospel which he preached?

The case of Cornelius then, was very different from that of those whose general conduct is worldly and sinful, who yet fancy that upon the whole, the good in them outweighs the evil; or if not, that a few external acts of devotion and charity, will satisfy the justice of God, and procure them an interest in the mediation of Christ. Good works, done from right motives, are undoubtedly acceptable to God, and will ensure his favour and blessing. See Psalm l. 23: John xiv. 21. They are in fact, the sure fruits of a living faith, and invariably accompany it. (Article 10 and 11 of the Church of England.) But they do not *entitle* us in any sense to the blessings of the gospel. The only qualification necessary to our obtaining these is, that we should *desire* them; or in the words of our Lord, that we should hunger and thirst after righteousness.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LV.

Heb. "Weigh." Because they used, in the first ages of the world, to weigh out their silver and gold, not having any coins.

יגיע, means that which is procured by labour. Chap. xlv. 14.

"*In fatness.*" This is literal, and being familiar to the ear, does not offend—otherwise I should have preferred, "*richest, or choicest, food,*" which is the thing intended.

"חסדי." Sept. "τα οσια Δαβιδ τα πιστα." The connection in which these words are quoted by St. Paul, Acts xiii. 34, is somewhat remarkable. The apostle is speaking of the resurrection of Christ, and refers to this passage in proof of it: "and as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the *sure mercies of David.* (τα οσια του Δαβιδ τα πιστα) Wherefore he saith also in another place, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One (τον οσιον σου) to see corruption." Upon which passage, Vitringa remarks, "The apostle has from hence rightly proved the resurrection of Messiah from the dead to eternal life, no more to return to corruption, as some, who were raised before him, because he must, *(according to the promise made to David)* reign for ever, and therefore live for ever; so that, although according to the purpose of God he would *die*, yet must he rise from the dead to a glorious and eternal life. For the whole promise of the *eternity* of David's kingdom, had reference to him, and was to be fulfilled in him; which could not be, if he had remained under the power of death." Vol. ii. p. 829.

The apostle's argument then, from this text appears to be as follows: "God promised to David an everlasting kingdom, to be established by Messiah, who, according to the flesh, would be his son; but as he must first die to make an atonement for sins, he must of necessity rise again, before the promise could be fulfilled."

"The Sept. everywhere translate חסיד, by οσιος; hence they also render חסדי, οσια; which therefore, in this place, signify the effects of God's love towards David." Vitringa.

(s) "כִּי אִם," *until*. So Vitringa, "nisi irrigaverit." This is indeed the natural meaning of the phrase. Gen. xxxii. 27.

(t) וְהִצְלִיחַ. "*Hath accomplished.*" The primitive meaning of the root appears to be, "*to finish a journey.*" Hence it comes to signify in Niphal, *to enable a person to finish a journey*, to make prosperous, and also, to accomplish; which last is evidently the meaning here.

SECT. 51. CHAP. LVI. 1—7.

THE seven verses which compose this Section are immediately connected with the preceding prophecy; although the words, "Thus saith Jehovah," afford sufficient ground for placing them in a section by themselves. Indeed the subjects treated of in them are quite distinct from the foregoing. They contain; 1st. A charge, accompanied with a promise, to those who were waiting for the coming of the Messiah, to continue steadfast in the observance of the precepts of the law, both moral and ceremonial, verses 1, 2. 2ndly. An intimation of the approaching abolition of those legal distinctions which existed under the Mosaic dispensation, with reference to foreigners and eunuchs, verses 3—7.

ISAIAH, Sect. 51. Chap. LVI. 1—5.

1. Thus saith Jehovah;
   Observe the ordinance, and do righteousness;
   For my salvation quickly cometh,
   And my righteousness is ready to be revealed.
2. Blessed is the man that doeth this;
   And the son of Adam, who firmly cleaveth to that;
   Who observeth the Sabbath, and polluteth it not,
   And keepeth his hand, from doing any evil.
3. And let not the son of the stranger, that cleaveth to Jehovah, speak, saying;
   Jehovah hath utterly separated me from his people.
   Neither let the eunuch say; Behold, I am a dry tree.
4. For thus saith Jehovah to the eunuchs who shall keep my sabbaths,
   And who shall choose that which pleaseth me, and firmly cleave to my covenant;
5. Surely I will give to them in my house, and within my walls,
   A place, and a name, better than of sons and of daughters;
   I will give them an everlasting name, which shall not be cut off.

6. And also the sons of the stranger, who shall be joined to Jehovah, to serve him,
   And to love the name of Jehovah, to be unto him for servants;
   Every one that observeth the sabbath, and polluteth it not,
   And they who cleave firmly unto my covenant;
7. Even them will I bring to my holy mountain,
   And I will make them joyful in my house of prayer;
   Their burnt offerings, and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon mine altar;
   For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LVI. 1, 2.

V. 1, 2. Although the mercies of the Gospel are bestowed upon those who have no claim to them on account of any merit in themselves, yet are they to be sought for in the way of holiness; and no one who knowingly and wilfully commits any sin, or neglects any positive duty, can reasonably look for them. "To him that ordereth his conversation aright, says the Spirit by David, will I shew the salvation of God." The prophet therefore, having spoken of the coming of Christ, and the blessings attending it, now exhorts those who feared God to prepare for his reception, by a strict observance of all the ordinances and precepts of the law.—The first direction, "*observe the ordinance,*" refers especially to the sabbath, as is evident from its particular mention in the seventh line; and the second, "*do righteousness,*" may be considered as a general exhortation to the active performance of all moral duties, such as, relieving the distressed, living temperately, &c. And the declaration with which these exhortations are accompanied, "*For my salvation quickly cometh,*" implies that none could hope to obtain the salvation and righteousness promised, who disregarded them. Thus also the prophet Malachi, after having foretold the coming of the Messiah, addressing those who lived under the law, he adds; "Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in

Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and *judgments.*" chap. iv. 4.

"*Blessed is the man that doeth this,*" &c. i. e. who doeth righteousness, and strictly observeth the ordinance of the sabbath. See remarks on chap. lviii.

V. 3—7. Under the law, no stranger was permitted to join himself with the congregation of Israel in any act of worship, or even to enter the temple, until he was regularly admitted a member of the Jewish church by purification and circumcision. Eunuchs also were excluded from many religious privileges. (Exod. xii. 43. Deut. xxiii. 1. Acts xxi. 28.)—Here, however, it is plainly intimated, that under the gospel, all distinctions of this nature would cease. All are to enjoy equal privileges, and equal favour. So the apostle; "In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; but all are one."[1]

"*Neither let the eunuch say,*" &c. This means, probably those born so, for it was not permitted the Jews to make eunuchs. Now since the possessions of the Israelites descended regularly from the father to the children, and parents were not allowed to alienate their estates from their families beyond the year of Jubilee;[2] the case of eunuchs would seem to themselves peculiarly hard, since at their death their name would be no longer remembered, and their possessions would descend to others. But God tells them they need not lament their condition, for if they embraced the gospel covenant, he would give them a place in his Church, and make them heirs of his eternal kingdom; which would be a far more substantial good, than any that could be derived by transmitting their names through their natural descendants. Is there not here a clear

[1] Gal. iii. 28. [2] Levit. xxv. 23.

intimation of the eternal duration of the happiness of believers ?

" *Their burnt offering and their sacrifices,*" &c. The prophet here, as in many other instances, employs language suitable to the times in which he lived. Burnt offerings and sacrifices ceased after our Lord had offered himself as a sacrifice for sin once for all. (Heb. ix. 25.) The only sacrifices therefore required of Christians are, prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, coming from devoted hearts, and accompanied with holy lives. (Compare Rom. xii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 5.) The sense then of this passage is, that all who " worship Jehovah in spirit and in truth," shall be accepted of him. John iv. 23.

SECT. 52. CHAP. LVI. 8—12. LVII.

THERE are few parts of Isaiah which have been more differently interpreted by commentators than that portion we are now about to consider.—From the fortieth chapter to the end of the seventh verse of the fifty-sixth, the prophecies proceed in a tolerably connected order, and the general meaning is sufficiently clear. But from the eighth verse of the fifty-sixth chapter, to the end of the fifty-ninth, the subject matter seems to be different from, and unconnected with, the preceeding.—Not to distract the reader's mind with the various schemes of interpretation that have been proposed by different expositors, I shall briefly state what appears to me to be the true one.—These chapters then, I suppose to form a distinct prophecy by themselves, delivered about the time of Hezekiah's death, and addressed more particularly to the men of his time.—The following Section contains; 1st. A declaration that Jehovah was about to bring fresh enemies against his people, whom he invites under the designation of *wild beasts*, to come and destroy Jerusalem; verses 8, 9. 2ndly. A severe reproof to the priests and rulers of Jerusalem for their ignorance, sloth, and sensuality, verses 10—12. 3rdly. AN address relative to the death of Hezekiah, chap. lvii. 1, 2. 4thly. A vivid representation of the abominable idolatries of the nation, verses 3—13. 5thly. Some encouraging promises to the humble and contrite, verses 14—21.

ISAIAH, Sect. 52. Chap. LVI. 8—12. Chap. LVII.

8. The Lord, Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith;
   I will yet gather others against him, besides those that were gathered against him. (1)
9. All ye beasts of the field, come to devour,
   All ye beasts of the forest, come to devour. (2)
10. His watchmen are blind, they have no knowledge;
    They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark;
    Dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber.
11. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough, (3)
    And they are shepherds who cannot understand:
    They all look to their own path, every man to his gain at the end of it.
12. Come, says one, I will bring wine, and let us fill ourselves with strong drink,
    And there (4) shall be to-morrow, as on this day, an exceeding great abundance.

Chap. lvii.—1. The righteous man is dead, (1) but no one layeth it to heart,
And holy (2) men are taken away, and none considereth,

2. That the righteous is taken away from the evil,
and entereth into peace;
They shall rest (3) upon their beds, every one
that walketh aright. (4)
3. But draw near hither ye sons of wickedness, (5)
Ye adulterous, and impure seed; (6)
4. Over whom do ye feast yourselves?
Against whom do ye open wide the mouth, and
lengthen out the tongue?
Are ye not rebellious children, a false seed? (7)
5. Burning with love of idols under every green
tree?
(Sacrificing children in the vallies, between the
clefts of the rocks;
6. Among the portions (8) of the valley, is thy
portion; these, these are thy lot:)
Even unto them hast thou poured out a libation,
hast thou offered an offering.
Shall I not take vengeance (9) for these things?
7. Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou placed
thy bed:
Even thither hast thou gone up to offer sacrifice.
8. Also behind the door, and the door posts, hast
thou put thy memorial;
For thou hast departed from me, and art gone up;
Thou hast enlarged thy bed, and hast made a
covenant with them:
Thou hast loved their bed, and hast provided a
place for them. (10)
9. And thou wentest to the king with ointment,
and didst take many perfumes;

And didst send thy messengers afar off, and didst debase thyself unto hell. ([11])

10. Though thou art weary with the length of thy way,
Thou saidst not, It is hopeless! ([12])
Thou hast found a little strength, therefore ([13]) thou hast not fainted.

11. And for whom hast thou been troubled, and afraid, that thou hast dealt falsely?
And hast not remembered me, nor regarded me?
Have I not long time ([14]) kept silence, and therefore thou hast not feared me?

12. I will declare thy righteousness and thy works, and they shall not profit thee.

13. When thou criest, let them to whom thou cleavest deliver thee;
But the wind shall carry them all away, a breath shall take them off;
But he that trusteth in me, shall possess the land, and inherit my holy mountain.

14. And I will say, ([15]) Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way.
Take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.

15. For thus saith the high, and lofty one,
Who inhabiteth eternity, and whose name is HOLY;
I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him also who is contrite, and of an humble spirit;
To revive the spirit of the humble,

And to revive the heart of the contrite.

16. For I will not contend for ever, nor will I be always wroth;
For the spirit would fail ([16]) before me, and the souls ([17]) which I have made.
17. Because of his iniquity, for a short time ([18]) was I wroth, and smote him;
I hid myself, and was wroth, and he went on, turning into the way of his own heart:
18. I have beheld his ways, and will heal him, and lead him;
And will restore comforts to him, and to his mourners;
19. (I am he that createth the fruit of the lips,)
Peace, peace, to him that is near, and to him that is afar off,
Saith Jehovah, and I will heal him.
20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, ([19])
And whose waters throw up mire and dirt;
21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LVI. 8.

V. 8. The generality of expositors connect this verse with the preceding. As if the meaning were; "The Lord Jehovah saith, I will yet gather others to Israel besides those which have been already gathered;" alluding to the gathering of the *strangers* and *eunuchs* before mentioned. But, in this case, it is impossible to make out any clear connection (although Vitringa indeed attempts it) between this verse and the following: the former, therefore, must be regarded as the conclusion of a prophecy, and the latter as the commencement of a new one. But is not the seventh verse a much more natural ending than this? And is not the ninth far too abrupt for the beginning of a prophecy? The reader who wishes to see this point further discussed may consult the Critical Notes.

Proceeding then upon the above hypothesis, that the prophet here enters upon a new subject, and that he delivered this prophecy about the time of Hezekiah's death, the words, "*The Lord, Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith,*" &c. are a denunciation against the wicked and profane men of the prophet's generation, and of the succeeding times.—"Jehovah, who had promised at a future period to gather together the scattered people of Israel, would yet previously assemble other enemies against them, besides those he had already brought upon them; i. e. besides the

Egyptians and Assyrians, and other nations who had distressed the Jews, he would bring upon them the Chaldeans and the Romans."

V. 9. God having declared in the preceding verse that he was about to gather together the enemies of Israel, now invites them to come and destroy Jerusalem; which being forsaken by him, on account of the sins of its inhabitants, would be exposed to their rage and fury, like a defenceless flock of sheep to a pack of hungry wolves, or other wild beasts.—The Gentiles are thus designated in many places: chap. xliii. 20. Psalm lxxx. 13. Jer. xii. 9.—The latter place is exactly parallel to this.

V. 10, 11. "*His watchmen are blind,*" &c. The watchmen of Israel and Jerusalem, were the king and his officers, the high priest, and the other ministers of religion. The former of these should have watched over the temporal, the latter over the spiritual concerns of the nation. But instead of so doing they consulted only their own ease and profit, and, regardless of the general interest, spent their time in sinful indulgences and sensual pleasures.—Thus in *idleness* they resembled *slothful dogs*, which being appointed to watch the flock, and give notice of the approach of danger, do nothing but sleep and dream; in *covetousness* they were like *greedy* dogs; and in *ignorance*, like *unskilful* and careless shepherds.

"*They all look to their own path,*" &c. That is, they think only of themselves, and their own interests.—Every person has some particular object in view through life.—With some, this is pleasure; with others, gain: with the Christian it is the favour of God, and eternal life.—Now as a man who sets out to go to a particular spot, takes the path which leads directly to it, and keeps that spot in view; so people act, generally, with refer-

ence to the particular object they have in their minds, which may be called their *end*.—The import therefore of the prophet's words in this place is; that the persons spoken of consulted only their own inclinations, and sought only worldly gain, in all their doings.

V. 12. "*Come, says one, I will bring wine,*" &c. These words are intended, I imagine, to represent the impious and indecent manner in which the ungodly priests and ministers of the court, acted after the death of Hezekiah.—Being freed from the restraint his presence imposed upon them, they gave themselves up to mirth and feasting, and exulted in his removal.—Compare verse 4, of the following chapter.

CHAP. LVII. 1.

V. 1. "*The righteous man is dead,*" &c. That there is an allusion here to the death of some particular individual, and that the prophet is not speaking generally of the light in which the death of the righteous is regarded, I have little doubt. But if a particular person be referred to, who so likely as Hezekiah? Upon his death the majority of the people relapsed into idolatry, and soon became guilty of every abomination. Whence we may infer that although that pious king effected a temporary reformation in religion, it was chiefly external; the great body of the nation, together with the priests and nobles, being really averse to the observance of those religious duties which the law of God required, and submitting to the restraints it imposed upon them merely from compulsion, or from worldly and interesting motives.—What then can be more appropriate than this address to such persons under such circumstances?

"The righteous man is dead, but no one layeth it to

heart;" No one, that is, is grieved at it, or regards the event as a mark of God's displeasure.

"*And holy men are taken away,*" &c. The former was a particular, this is a general declaration.—Hezekiah's death was disregarded; or afforded only an occasion of rejoicing to an impious court and people.—And so, says the prophet, it generally happens.—When holy men are taken away in the prime of life the event is little noticed by the world; and few consider that the reason why God takes them away while he permits the wicked to live out all their days, is, that they may be spared from suffering.—This is a general and consolatory truth; but was particularly applicable to Hezekiah who, by being taken off at the age of forty-five, was spared the pain of seeing his son and heir turn out a reprobate, and his country and capital city ravaged by foreign armies.—Compare chap. xxxix. 8.

V. 2. "*They shall rest upon their beds,*" &c. Vitringa understands this to refer to the rest of the souls of the righteous in the place of departed spirits, until the resurrection. But the more received opinion is, that the *beds* of the righteous, mean their *tombs*, in which the bodies of believers rest, until the voice of the Son of God shall call them forth.

"*Every one that walketh aright.*" Those who walk aright, or in the way of rectitude, are they who live according to the revealed will of God, and keep the path he has pointed out.—The authorized version is particularly unhappy here, as it seems to countenance the idea of a man's being justified by his own works.—See Critical Note.

V. 3, 4. The prophet now directs his discourse more pointedly to the impious priests and rulers of Jerusalem, whom he sharply rebukes for their impiety and idolatry. He calls them an *adulterous and impure seed*, because

of their proneness to idolatry, which is spiritual adultery and impurity.—For Jehovah being their rightful Lord and master, for them to turn from him and worship idols, was like a woman's forsaking her lawful husband for another man.

"*Over whom do ye feast yourselves,*" &c. The persons here addressed are evidently those whose conduct is described in the twelfth verse of the preceeding chapter. They feasted and exulted on account of Hezekiah's death. And who was he? One of the best kings, and most holy men, that ever sat upon the throne of Judah. It was in the death of such a man that they delighted. By *making wide the mouth*, laughter is intended; and by *lengthening out the tongue*, abuse and calumny. And is it not more than probable that the impious courtiers of Hezekiah would, at their tables, and over their wine, deride his piety, and revile his memory? We know, nothing excites more the malignity and scorn of the wicked than the principles and practice of the truly pious.

"*Are ye not rebellious children,*" &c. As if God had said; "Instead of mocking at, and exulting over the righteous, ought you not rather to grieve for yourselves, and seek forgiveness of your own sins?" Is not the self-blindness of the scoffers at real piety astonishing? They can see, and will condemn in the severest terms, the smallest error or failing in those who profess religion, whilst they seem entirely to overlook the enormous sins of which they themselves are guilty.

V. 5, 6. "*Burning with love of idols,*" &c. Their propensity to the worship of idols, was like the passion of an abandoned woman for a variety of lovers. Wherever they found any image they were ready immediately to fall down and worship it. "*Under every green tree.*" See note on chap. i. verse 29.

"*Sacrificing children,*" &c. In the 1st Kings xxi. 1—9. the reader will find a particular account of the abominable idolatries practised in Manasseh's reign.—Being but about twelve years old at the time when I suppose this prophecy to have been written, he could not himself as yet have had a principal share in these practices; but he did not oppose them; and probably even at this early age he shewed a bias towards those horrible abominations which he afterward so strenuously promoted.

"*Among the portions of the valley is thy portion,*" &c. The valley of Hinnom is, no doubt, the valley here alluded to. We are expressly told that Manasseh caused his children to pass through the fire to Moloch in this valley. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 6.) Idolaters *chose* these retired spots as being best suited, on account of their secrecy, for the performance of their horrid rites; and this is what these expressions imply.—According to the Hebrew phraseology that is said to be a person's *portion* or *lot,* which he makes choice of; thus, Psalm xvi. 5; "The Lord is the *portion* of mine inheritance."

"*Unto them.*" To the idols mentioned in verse 5.

"*Hast thou.*" Not Manasseh, or any other individual, but the apostate Jewish church.

"*Shall I not take vengeance,*" &c. So in Jeremiah, chap. v. 9. "Shall I not visit for these things? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

V. 7, 8. Idolatry, as has been before remarked, is spiritual adultery. We owe divine honours and worship to Jehovah alone—He is the LORD of his church, to whom all love and reverence are due. But, like an adulterous woman who should set her bed upon the top of a high mountain, and invite all passers by to come to her, the corrupt Jewish church, under the reigns

of such princes as Manasseh, encouraged every species of idolatry, and built up altars, and offered sacrifices, upon high places, to the gods of every nation round about them. And thus she, as it were, *enlarged her bed*, gladly admitting the worship of any strange god.

"*Also behind the door,—hast thou put thy memorial.*" Besides their public idols, these words shew that the Jews had their *household* gods, which, like the Greeks and Romans, they kept behind their door posts, to remind them continually whom they served.—See chap. ii. 8, and note.

V. 9. "*Thou wentest to the king,*" &c. By the *king*, must be meant Baal, or some other chief heathen deity.—The endeavours of the wicked Jews to conciliate his favour, are compared to the meretricious arts of a wanton woman to gain admirers.

"*And didst send thy messengers afar off.*" So Ahaz sent a pattern of an altar which he saw at Damascus, to Urijah the priest, and commanded him to make one like it, and place it in the temple at Jerusalem. 2 Kings xvi. 10—16.

V. 10. "*Though thou art weary,*" &c. The sense is, "although the Jews had tried first one idol, and then another, to no purpose, yet would they not acknowledge their case to be hopeless, and that there was no help but in Jehovah.—They had found *a little strength*; although much harrassed and distressed by their enemies, their city still continued, and they were thus encouraged to persist in their idolatries."

V. 11—13. "*Of whom hast thou been afraid,*" &c. These verses may be thus paraphrased; "Why hast thou feared thine enemies which are unable to hurt thee without my permission, and hast *dealt falsely* by me, seeking assistance and protection from idols instead of at my hand? Hast thou not acted in this manner,

and disregarded me, because I have hitherto *kept silence?* because I have not punished thee according to thy deserts? But know that I am about to visit thee for thy sins, and shew thee the vanity of thy *works*, and then let thine idol gods help thee if they can."

V. 14. "*And I will say, Cast ye up, cast ye up,*" &c. That is, "I will prepare a way for them, and command the removal of every obstacle that may obstruct their passage."—Referring primarily to the return of the pious remnant from Babylon.—But see chap. xxxv. and chap. xl. 4.

V. 15. How encouraging is the doctrine contained in this verse, and how sublime and beautiful the language in which it is conveyed! He that inhabiteth *eternity*, whom the *heaven of heavens cannot contain*, even he declares that he will dwell also in the *humble* and *contrite* heart. Is not the doctrine of the indwelling of God by his Spirit in the heart of the believer here plainly taught? May the readers of these words have them fulfilled in themselves.—But let it be remembered, that to an *experimental* knowledge of this doctrine, not only an *humble* heart, but a *pure* heart also is necessary.—"*Blessed*, says our Lord, *are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*"

V. 16—18. These words, like the preceding, are intended for the consolation of the pious. Jehovah had declared his determination to punish his rebellious church. Yet he would temper his *judgments* with *mercy*. He would mitigate the sufferings of his people, and set a limit to their duration, lest they should be driven to despair, and be led to suppose that he had utterly forsaken them.—Compare chap. xxvii. 8.

The conduct of God, in this respect, is an example to us.—The Christian is to abhor sin, and reprove it; and where he has authority and power, he is bound also to

punish it. But he is to take care that he does not exercise an excess of rigor in so doing; lest the guilty person be *swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*, and driven to despair. It was on this principle the apostle acted with reference to the incestuous person at Corinth. 2 Cor. ii. 7.

"*I have beheld his ways and will heal him*," &c. That there is any particular reference here to the case of Manasseh, is perhaps very improbable; yet the coincidence between this language, and what we read concerning him, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13, would almost justify such an application.

V. 19. Strictly and literally speaking, *words* are the *fruit of the lips*. These may be either threatening and terrifying, or gracious and comforting. The latter description are intended here. The import, therefore, of this verse is, generally, that Jehovah by his ministers will ever *proclaim peace* to those who are truly humble and penitent. He did so to Manasseh. But more especially does God proclaim peace to all penitent sinners, by Christ and his ministers.

V. 20. The sea, constantly undulating, and throwing up from its bottom various impurities, is a true and striking emblem of the mind of a man who lives without God in the world.—Pride, ambition, envy, hatred, avarice, and sensual passions, like so many furious and opposite winds contending for the mastery, disturb his inner state; and from that sink of iniquity the carnal heart, sinful words, and unholy actions continually spring.—(Matt. xv. 19.) But whilst this is the case, can there be peace in the soul? No; "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." But why is this declaration introduced here? To warn those impious men who were rejoicing in the death of Hezekiah, and flattering themselves with pleasing anticipations now

that they might freely indulge themselves in sin, the restraint of his presence being removed, to warn them, I say, of the vanity of their expectations.—See chap. xlviii. 22.

REMARKS.

How instructive and solemn a lesson does this section contain, with reference both to ministers of religion, and to the people under their charge! We see that indolence, covetousness, and sensuality, in the former, expose the latter to every evil and danger. For it is evident that the reproofs of the prophet are directed chiefly against the priests, and teachers of religion.—Is the reader of these remarks a minister of the Gospel? Consider, my brother and fellow labourer in God's vineyard, the immense and awful responsibility that rests upon us. How carefully ought we to examine our principles, and to regulate our conduct!

What will become of us, and what will become of our people, if, instead of laying out ourselves for *their* good, and seeking to feed *them* with the bread of life, and of setting them an example of self-renunciation and holiness, we have regard only to our own ease and profit, and in our general conduct manifest a selfish and worldly spirit? And must not this be the case with those who engage either, in the dissipating amusements of fashionable life, or in the cares of business, or in the still more dangerous though specious pursuit of honours and preferment? Let it be our prayer then, that we ourselves may be holy, disinterested, and devoted, and that it would please the Lord of the vineyard, to raise up daily many faithful labourers whose aim may be, not popular applause, nor sordid lucre, nor earthly honours, but,

the glory of God, and the salvation of men. "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing."

The light in which the death of the righteous should be regarded; the mercy and compassion of Jehovah; and his infinite condescension to the humble and contrite sinner, as set forth in chapter lvii. are also subjects deserving of our attentive consideration. The following extract from Milner's Church History, illustrates in an interesting manner the light in which the primitive Christians regarded the doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer's soul.—Ignatius was brought before the emperor Trajan to be examined by him. The martyr had styled himself *Theophorus*. 'Traj. Pray, who is Theophorus? Ign. He who has Christ in his breast. Traj. And thinkest thou not that gods reside in us also, who fight for us against our enemies? Ign. You mistake in calling the demons 'gods.' For there is only ONE God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; and ONE Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, whose kingdom be my portion. Traj. His kingdom do you say, who was crucified under Pilate? Ign. His, who crucified my sin with its author; and has put all the fraud and malice of Satan under the feet of those who carry him in their heart. Traj. Dost thou then carry him who was crucified within thee? Ign. I do; for it is written; "I dwell in them, and walk in them." '—Church Hist. vol. i. p. 153. Ignatius lived in the first century, and was appointed Bishop of Antioch by the Apostles themselves. His testimony, therefore, to the indwelling of the Spirit, and the divinity of Christ, both which doctrines are plainly asserted in the above extract, is entitled at least to respect and serious consideration from those who would impugn them.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LVI. 8—12.

(1) I cannot say that I feel certain as to the true rendering of this verse.—However, after much turning of it in my mind, it seems to me very clear, that נאם אדני, is the beginning of a new prophecy.—The phrase is often thus used. See for example, Zech. xii. 1. Also, that עליו means *against* him, not *to* him.—Zechariah, in the chapter just cited, verse 3, employs it in the same manner, when speaking too of a similar event, the gathering of the Gentiles against Jerusalem. Unless it be so translated, this verse must be connected with the 7th, and the 9th will be the beginning of a new subject, which is most improbable. It has occurred to me that נדחי, might be translated actively, *the scatterers*; this would make the whole passage very clear.

" The Lord Jehovah who assembleth the scatterers of Israel.

(2) " *Come to devour.*" These words are not repeated in the Hebrew, but they seem necessary to complete the sense.

(3) Heb. " *They know not satiety, or fulness.*"

(4) The nominative to היה, is יתר, not מחר, as in the authorized version.

CHAP. LVII.

(1) " *Is dead.*" The English word *perisheth*, conveys the idea of destruction, and is rather applicable to the wicked than the righteous; I have therefore substituted a term of more general application.

(2) חסד, applied to God's mind towards us, signifies, *kindness, beneficence, love*; but used with reference to our feelings towards him, it implies *piety* or *holiness*, because these are the result of love.—This phrase therefore means, " men of piety, or holiness."

(3) ינוחו, *they shall rest*, in the plural, to agree with אנשי חסד.

(4) " *Walketh aright.*" Or, walketh straight before him.—Compare Prov. iv. 25.

(5) " *Sons of wickedness.*" So the Sept. υιοι ανομοι. They read no doubt, עולה, which is the reading of one M.S.

(6) "*Impure seed.*" Literally, fornicating seed. But it is better surely to avoid any word that gives offence to the ear, if it can be done without altering the sense.

(7) "*A false seed;*" i.e. A race that deal falsely.

(8) "בחלקי נחל חלקך." Commentators have made strange difficulties about these words, the meaning of which, as far as I can see, is as plain as the meaning of any sentence in Isaiah.—חלקי is clearly the plural of חלק, and if the latter word mean *portion*, the former must mean *portions*. With this agrees the version of the Sept. "εκεινη σου η μερις." The rendering of our translators, and of Bp. Lowth, "*among the smooth stones of the valley*," is both fanciful, and without certain meaning. For as to what the latter says respecting the worship of rude stones, although this was a common thing among the Gentiles, it does not appear ever to have been practised by the Jews; here, certainly, the worship of some particular deity is referred to.

(9) The word לא has, I imagine, been by mistake omitted here before אנחם. There is no authority for rendering this verb, "*should I take pleasure*," besides that so translated it gives a feeble sense.—Perhaps instead of אנחם, we should read אנקם; such a mistake might easily occur from the similarity in sound between the letters ח and ק. If the received reading be retained, the literal rendering will be, "shall I not ease, or release, myself because of these things?"—Compare chap. l. 24. and Jer. v. 9.

(10) יד, *a place*. So in chap. lvi. 6.

(11) שאול. See Critical Note 14, of chap. v. vol. i. p. 134.

(12) This passage throws some light upon Jerem. ii. 25, which ought, no doubt to be translated in the same manner.

(13) "*A little strength.*" Literally, *the life of thy hand*. But this means a *little* life or strength; just sufficient to support thee.

(14) For ומעולם, many M.S.S. have מעלם, which Bp. Lowth thinks should be pointed, מֶעֱלֵם, and translates, *and winked*. Sept. παροργω.

(15) "*And I will say;*" ואמר to be pointed as the first person future.—Bp. Lowth.

(16) "*Would fail.*" Literally, *would be overwhelmed*. Psalm lxi. 3.

(17) "*The souls,*" נשמות. Compare Gen. ii. 7.

(18) "*A short time.*" So the Sept. Βραχυ τι. Bp. Lowth supposes the true reading to be, בצע, from the verb which signifies, *to cut off*.

(19) The כי here seems redundant, and is not found in one M.S.

SECT. 53. CHAP. LVIII.

THE prophet in this section, by the direction of God, shews the Jews the reasons why their fasts, and other acts of austerity, were not accepted, and did not procure them the divine blessing. It was because they were accompanied with unholy tempers and sinful practices, and were done altogether in a wrong spirit. He then points out to them what acts are really acceptable to God, and will insure his blessing, viz.; acts of kindness and benevolence towards the poor and afflicted, and a conscientious observance of, and regard to, the Sabbath-day. To those who thus evidence the reality of their faith by their works, great things are promised.

ISAIAH, Sect. 53. Chap. LVIII. 1—4.

1. Cry aloud, (1) spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet;
   And shew my people their transgression, and the house of Israel their sin.
2. Yet they seek me daily, and have pleasure in the knowledge of my ways,
   As a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God:
   They ask of me the ordinances of righteousness, and take pleasure in approaching to God,
3. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?
   Have we afflicted our souls, and thou regardest not?
   Behold, in the day of your fast, ye find means of pleasure,
   And rigorously exact all your oppressions. (2)
4. Behold ye fast to strive, and to contend;
   And to smite with the fist the poor. (3)
   Wherefore fast ye as at this day, that ye may cause your voice to be heard on high?

children and servants; so that it is become common to say of a man when he is *out of temper*, "He is keeping fast:" and they complain one to another, of the debility, and thirst, and affliction which they endure. In short, according to this faith, they pass the whole day in *preparing syrups*, and juices of fruit, and walking in shady gardens; and if asked where they are coming from, they answer from *beguiling* their fast: and whomsoever you look upon, they have their forehead anointed with sandal perfume, and are anxiously watching the progress of the skies, and continually asking one another how much of the day remains. As soon as the sun is down, they fill themselves with all kinds of food; so that it would be no wonder if they were not hungry for two or three days to come."[1]

Such are the Mahommedan fasts, and such, no doubt, were the fasts of the Jews.

V. 5. "*This the day.*" i. e. the manner of spending the day that I approve?

V. 6. "*Is not this the fast—to loose the bands of wickedness.*" &c. We are not, I imagine, to infer from hence that these acts were to supersede the necessity of fasting, but that they were to *accompany* it, and that without them it would be useless—See Remarks.

V. 8—11. The promises given in these verses are not addressed to any individual, but to the Jewish church. Did its members perform those acts of love and charity which are here enjoined; then would Jehovah bless them with spiritual light and joy, and with a continual increase of grace and holiness. These promises are conveyed in various metaphors. The Church is addressed under three emblems, as the *sun*, as a *plant*, and as a *person*. With reference to

[1] Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society, 1821, 1822. p. 251.

the first, it is said; "*Then shall thy light break forth as the morning:*" thy light, that is, shall shine forth bright and clear, like the sun, when thou obeyest the commands of thy God, and aboundest in acts of righteousness. With reference to the second, it is said; "*Thy stature shall quickly shoot up,*" &c. i. e., thou shalt be watered with the Holy Spirit, and thy members shall daily grow in grace and knowledge, and in all the essential characteristics of true religion; as young plants shoot up and flourish, when watered by the rain, and warmed by the sun. With relation to the third, it is said; "*And Jehovah shall guide thee—and strengthen thy bones,*" &c.

Thus then, in these verses, knowledge, growth in grace, safety, and strength, are promised to the Jewish Church generally, and to all its members in particular, if their character and practice were such as is described. Good works then will bring down upon us the blessing of God? Undoubtedly they will; provided, that is, they are done in a right manner, and spring from a pure principle of love to God and man, wrought in the soul by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, so far from being acceptable to God, even works good in themselves may become evil, from the motive which produces them. See Remarks on chap. lvi.

"*Thy righteousness shall go before thee,*" &c. That is, thy holiness, thy good works shall, as it were, recommend thee to thine enemies, and be thy safeguard; and the consequence shall be, that Jehovah thy God shall be glorified. Thus our Lord says to his disciples; —"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

"*The yoke—smiting with the hand.*" These are put for *oppression* and *violence.*

"*A well-watered garden.*" The gardens in the East are not dependent, in the slightest degree, upon the rains. For during the hot season, the *time of drought*, not a drop of rain falls for months together. They are therefore watered by artificial means. A deep well is sunk in the middle of the garden, (sometimes a tank supplies its place) from which the water is raised in leathern buckets, and conveyed to every part by small aqueducts or channels. These circumstances being known, the beauty and force of the imagery employed by the prophet, are clearly seen. What would be the state of a garden of this description in the hot season without its well? It would be parched up and barren. Such is the state of the church, when not watered with the dew of the Holy Spirit.

V. 12. All the promises in this chapter, like those in Psalm lxxxi. 13, are conditional. Did the Jewish Church reform itself, and not content with a mere outward service, render to God a spiritual worship, then, *they* that *came forth of her*, or, in other words, her *children*, her *members*, would restore to Jerusalem, its temple and services, their pristine glory. Jehovah was about to punish them solely on account of their sins; if therefore they forsook them, he would withdraw his chastisements, and again build up the walls of Jerusalem. Compare chap. xxvii. 9. and note.

V. 13. The Jews, during the reigns of their latter kings, appear to have been particularly negligent in the observance of the Sabbath, and when they did observe it, like many in our own days, to have considered it as a burdensome and grievous imposition.—(2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. Ezek. xx. 13. Amos viii. 5.)

This is the reason, then, why the duties of the Sabbath are so much dwelt upon by Isaiah; but this shews how important those duties are in the eyes of God. See Remarks.

V. 14. "*Then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah.*" Then, that is, shalt thou rejoice in Jehovah as thy God and Saviour; thou shalt delight in his service and worship, and he shall impart to thy soul spiritual joy and peace.

"*And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.*" &c. The meaning is, "I will make thee to triumph over all thine enemies." The same phrase, and signifying the same thing, is used, Deut. xxxii. 13,—and Psalm xviii. 33. The metaphor is taken from a mighty conqueror, who rides in triumph over the highest and strongest forts of his enemy's country, and brings them into subjection.

"*And feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy Father.*" The products of the land of Canaan, the *heritage of Jacob*, such as honey out of the rock, and the finest wheat, were the blessings which God promised to the Israelites, if they were obedient; but these were only emblematical of that more excellent food, of a spiritual nature, with which God, refreshes, nourishes, and strengthens those who walk in the ways of holiness.—Compare chap. i. 19. and note.

REMARKS.

In this chapter we find many *great and precious promises*; but they are given in connexion with exhortations to particular duties, and the accomplishment of them is made dependent upon the faithful and

regular performance of those duties. The three especially referred to, are, *fasting*, *almsgiving*, and the *observance of the Sabbath*. Now is it not an interesting and important question, how far we are concerned in these things? How far these duties are required of us, in order to our obtaining the blessings of the Gospel? It will not then, I trust, be unprofitable to consider somewhat at large the nature of these duties, and the extent to which they are obligatory on Christians.

OF FASTING.

Our Lord's directions with reference to this religious duty are familiar to us all, "*When*, says he, ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance;—but anoint thine head, and wash thy face," &c. (Matt. vi.) Hence then it appears evident that Christ requires his disciples to observe some kind of abstinence from meat and drink. Otherwise he would not have said, "*When* ye fast," but, do not fast at all. This argument seems plain and conclusive. The only question therefore is; In what manner, and to what degree ought we to fast? Now in order to answer this question, since the Scriptures give us no precise and definite directions upon the subject, we must first ascertain what is the chief *end* of fasting; for when we know the end to be obtained, we are then capable of judging what are the best means of attaining that end. What then is the end of fasting? Is it not, by the practice of abstinence, to acquire a command over the bodily appetites, and thus to make ourselves less the slaves of sensual passions? Is it not by the exercise of self-denial in one thing, in itself lawful, to enable us to deny ourselves in things that are unlawful? Is it not in short to make ourselves more pure, more

holy, more heavenly-minded? This being the case, that degree of fasting must be required of every Christian, which is best calculated to promote the above ends. Here then we have a plain and infallible rule to guide us in this matter. If we find that by abstaining altogether from food at certain seasons, we acquire more freedom in prayer, and are more detached from the world, and in general more spiritually-minded, then we shall certainly do right to fast as often as possible. But if, on the contrary, abstinence from food prove injurious to the bodily health, weaken the powers of the mind, and render a person morose and peevish, then undoubtedly the only design of fasting is entirely counteracted, and it cannot but prove pernicious rather than useful. Fasting therefore is purely a matter of *expediency*, in which every person must judge for himself; it being impossible to lay down any rules which shall be generally applicable. This however is certain, that it is incumbent upon every real disciple of Christ to observe the *strictest temperance* at all times. Could we always do this, and never take more meat and drink than nature requires, other fasting would perhaps in no case be necessary. And in fact do not our Lord's directions upon this subject, imply that this is the sort of fast he would have his disciples chiefly exercise? They are not to *appear to men to fast*; and how can this direction be so effectually observed, and all ostentatious display be so well avoided, as by a secret, and constant denial of the appetite? which indeed is to observe a continual fast; for being naturally disposed to take more food than is good, in order to adhere strictly to the rules of temperance, we must ever be on our guard, and constantly deny ourselves. The reader who feels an interest on this subject, will do well to compare together the following passages;

Matt. xvii. 21. Acts xiii. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 5. The inference to be drawn from all that is said in the New Testament upon the subject, is, I think, that fasting is *expedient*, although not *essential* to salvation. As for set fasts at regular periods, they are certainly not enjoined any where in the New Testament. At the same time, the declaration of our Lord; "*This kind goeth not out, but by fasting and prayer;*" the example of the apostles, who appear never to have undertaken any business of importance without fasting: and the directions of St. Paul to married persons in the passage of the Epistle to the Corinthians above referred to: all concur in establishing the utility and propriety of more than ordinary abstinence on particular occasions.

OF ALMSGIVING.

This is so plainly required of all Christians, that it is unnecessary to bring forward any texts of Scripture to establish its importance. But may it not admit of doubt, whether those persons who may be said to constitute what is called the *religious world* in our days give this duty sufficient attention? There is indeed generally speaking a readiness in most of them to support charitable institutions by annual subscriptions and donations, and perhaps also to relieve distress when it is brought to their notice. But is this all that is required? Ought the Christian to be satisfied with giving when *asked?* Ought he not to *seek out* objects of charity? Ought he not to consider that the money he has to spare over and above the *necessary*, or at least *reasonable*, (in a Christian sense) expenses of himself and family, is a fund intrusted to him by God for the good of others, and therefore not to be expended by him in self-gratification, but in promoting the welfare of his fellow creatures? This, let it be observed, is

not, like fasting, a matter merely of *expediency*, it is a duty *essential* to salvation. If it were not so, would our Lord have assigned the *neglect* of it as the chief ground of the condemnation of the hypocritical professor of religion, and *regard* to it as the ostensible reason of the real Christian's acceptance? (Matt. xxv 31—46.) Far be it from me to intimate that acts of charity, however great, can ever purchase for us eternal life. We know that a man may give *all* his goods to feed the poor, (1 Cor. xiii.) without avail. But surely every one must admit that charity, in the vulgar acceptation of the term, is one of the essential requisites of a living faith. (James ii. 15.) It behoves every Christian then seriously to consider what proportion of his property God has given him for *himself*, and what proportion for *others*; and having settled this in his own mind, not to be satisfied with the *indiscriminate* distribution of that portion which is not his own, giving without thought or inquiry to every one who asks, until all is gone; but by some regular plan to assist the efforts of the industrious, and to relieve the distresses of those who suffer in silence. Remembering however the Apostle's maxim, "to do good unto *all men*, but *especially* unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. vi. 10.

OF THE SABBATH.

It has sometimes been questioned whether Christians are strictly speaking bound to observe any one day as more sacred than another. To attempt to enter fully into the discussion of this point in these remarks would be useless, and is unnecessary. The consideration, that God in the beginning blessed the seventh day, and *consecrated* it, or set it apart for peculiar uses, (Gen.

ii. 3.) long before the giving of the law; that the precept concerning it is inserted amongst the ten commandments, not in the Levitical law; that it is certain from many passages in the New Testament, that the primitive Christians were accustomed to assemble together every seventh day for religious purposes; (Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.) that pious persons of every age have felt a reverential regard for the Sabbath, or Lord's day, (it matters little which we call it, or whether it be observed on the first or the last day of the week) and that the wicked have ever *disregarded* it; these considerations, with many others that might be urged, sufficiently prove, to my mind, the duty and desirableness of the seventh day rest from earthly business and pleasures. It is perhaps impossible to calculate the influence which the observance of Sunday (abused and perverted as it is,) has upon the morals and character of a population at large. Were it not for that, (it may be in many cases superstitious) regard which is paid to the Sabbath in our own country, we should I fear in a short time be little better than a nation of atheists. Let us be careful then, how we allow ourselves to entertain lax ideas with reference to the sanctity of the Sabbath; and much more how we attempt to influence others to regard it with less reverence, than they from education and example have been accustomed to do. Whatever opinions we may be disposed to form upon this subject from abstract reasonings respecting the *freedom* of the gospel, the great practical utility arising from a religious regard to one day in seven, ought to make every man cautious how he attempts to weaken its power over the mind. As to the proper manner of spending the Sunday, nothing can be more expressive and comprehensive

than the directions of the prophet. We are not to do *our own pleasure*, nor follow our *own pursuits*, nor to speak our *own words*, (words, that is, which have reference to our own concerns); but we are to consider the day as Jehovah's, to whose service it is to be exclusively devoted. Can this consist, I would ask, with walks and drives amongst crowds of the gay and thoughtless, in parks and pleasure grounds, during the intervals of divine service? A Pharisaical and Judaical strictness is to be avoided; but it is better to err on this side than on the other.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LVIII.

(1) "*Cry aloud.*" Heb.—"*In the throat.*"

(2) "עצביכם,—*your oppressions.*" Literally, *sorrows, grievances,* which are caused by oppression. Septuagint, τοις υποχειριοις υμων υποκεισεται.

(3) "Instead of רשע לא, the Sept. seem to have read, רש על מה לי, which gives a much better sense than the present reading of the Hebrew. Their version is, και τυπτετε πυγμαις ταπεινων· ινα τι μοι νηστειετε." Bp. Lowth.

(4) כזה, it appears to me, is understood before יום, and the verb also is supposed to be repeated, thus;—"Is this the fast that I approve? This the day that I approve."

(5) מרודים, *houseless.* So Sept. πτωχοις αστεγους.—The derivation of this meaning from the root is certainly not very clear, but the context is decidedly in favour of it—"Bring the *houseless* to thy house."

(6) "*Stature.*" The authorized version is, *health.* But is there any propriety in the phrase, "*thy health shall spring up?*"

(7) "Instead of נפשך, *thy soul,* eight MSS. (three ancient) read לחמך, *thy bread,* and so the Syriac renders it. The LXX. express both words."—Bp. Lowth. "To draw out the soul to the hungry," as the Bishop observes, is an obscure phrase and not found elsewhere.

(8) יחליץ. Literally, *he shall make free, light,* or *supple.*

(9) "*Habitations.*" The usual rendering is *paths.* But are the *paths* dwelt in? May not the true rendering be משבות?

(10) One MS. has מעשות.

SECT. 54. CHAP. LIX.

THIS chapter is evidently a continuation of the prophecy contained in the preceding. The prophet shews, that it was not because Jehovah's power and goodness were less than formerly, that his people's blessedness was less, but because of their sins, verses 1, 2; these he describes at large in the six following verses, verses 3—8; he then in the name, and as the representative of the Jewish church, acknowledges and laments the national guilt, to which all their distresses are ascribed, verses 9—15; the remainder of the chapter predicts the coming of Jehovah to save his true people, and punish their oppressors, concluding with a promise of the perpetual duration of the doctrine of Christ, verses 16—21.

1. Behold the hand of Jehovah is not shortened
that it cannot save,
Nor his ear dull that it cannot hear;
2. But your iniquities have separated between you
and your God,
And your sins have hid his face from you, so
that he will not hear.
3. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your
fingers with iniquity;
Your lips speak falsehood, and your tongue
uttereth wickedness.
4. None sueth in justice, none pleadeth in truth;
Each one trusteth in vanity, and speaketh lies,
Conceiveth mischief, and bringeth forth iniquity.
5. They hatch the eggs of the basilisk, (1) and
weave the spider's web;
He that eateth of their eggs dieth, and if one
be crushed, a viper breaketh forth:
6. Their webs shall not become a garment, nor
shall they cover themselves with their works;
Their works are wicked works, and the hire (2)
of violence is in their hands.

7. Their feet run to evil, and hasten to shed innocent blood:
   Their thoughts are wicked thoughts, desolation and destruction are in their ways:
8. The path of peace they know not, and there is no judgment in their goings;
   They have made crooked paths for themselves, every one that walketh in them, knoweth not peace.
9. Therefore judgment is far from us, and justice doth not reach us;
   We looked for light, but behold darkness;
   For brightness, and we walk in obscurity.
10. We grope about like the blind for the wall,
   Yea like one who hath no eyes we grope:
   We stumble at noon day, as in the night;
   In the midst of delicacies, ([3]) as among the dead.—
11. We all groan like bears, and moan like doves;
   We look for judgment, and it comes not,—for salvation, but it is far from us.
12. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins witness against us;
   For our transgressions are with us, and our iniquities we acknowledge them:
13. By transgressing, and lying, against Jehovah, and by departing from our God;
   By speaking oppression, and conceiving revolt, and by uttering from the heart lying words.
14. Therefore judgment is turned away, and justice standeth afar off;

For truth hath stumbled in the street, and rectitude cannot enter.

15. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil is plundered. ([4])
And Jehovah saw, and was displeased, that there was no judgment;

16. And he saw, and was grieved, ([5]) that there was no man to intercede:
Therefore his own arm wrought salvation for him, and his righteousness sustained him;

17. And he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and the helmet of salvation was on his head:—
And he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, ([6]) and clad himself with zeal, as with a cloak:

18. Lord ([7]) of retribution, the Lord, he will repay, wrath to his adversaries,
Vengeance to his enemies; to his enemies ([8]) vengeance will he repay.

19. And they shall fear the name of Jehovah from the west,
And his glory from the rising of the sun:
For he shall come like a rushing river, which a mighty wind driveth along; ([9])

20. But he shall come a Redeemer to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression, ([10]) in Jacob,
Saith Jehovah.

21. And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah:

My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words
which I have put in thy mouth,
Shall not be removed out of thy mouth, nor
out of the mouth of thy seed,
Nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed,
Saith Jehovah, from henceforth, nor for ever.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LIX. 1—8.

V. 1, 2. Jehovah often permitted his chosen people, the Jews, to be overcome by their enemies, and to endure the most distressing calamities; and when they cried to him for deliverance, he seemed to pay no regard to them. Now the reason was, not that his *hand was shortened*, or in other words, that he was *unable* to help them, nor that his *ear was dull*, that he did *not hear*; but he gave them up to their enemies because of their *sins*, which were an insuperable barrier between his mercy and them. The declaration admits of a general application, and appears to relate, not to any particular period in the Jewish history, but to the several evils which God suffered the nation to endure at different times, with a primary reference perhaps to the Babylonish captivity.

V. 3—8. St. Paul quotes the greater part of these verses, to prove that the Jews, by nature, were not better than the Gentiles. Rom. iii. 13. They therefore may be regarded as a general description of the unregenerate part of the nation, and not as a representation of the character of particular individuals more wicked than the rest. But is it possible that a whole people should be so corrupt and abandoned as the Jews are here represented? The picture indeed is bad; but is it not a faithful delineation of mankind at large? Are we any better? Are not the same sins and vices com-

mon amongst ourselves? And, as a nation, may not the same language be used of us? Let us now consider the particulars of this description, and we shall, I think, find in it nothing incredible or improbable.

"*Your hands are defiled with blood,*" &c. These words are not to be taken in their strict, literal meaning; as if the Jews were a nation of murderers. But they are to be understood, like the other allusions, in a general sense. Murder, one evil act of the *hands*, is put for evil actions generally, because it is the worst that can be done. And so with the rest. The reader will observe that most of the members of the body are referred to. Their *hands* were defiled with blood; that is, their actions were generally wicked, prompted by hatred and malice: (Matt. v. 21. 1 John iii. 15.) their *tongues* uttered deceit and lies: their *feet ran* to do evil: their *hearts* conceived nothing but mischief and iniquity; and thus the whole man was corrupt in principle and in practice.

"*None sueth in justice,*" &c. Both plaintiff and defendant in your courts of justice are equally guilty. The one brings an unjust action, and the other defends himself by lies and falsehood.

"*They hatch the eggs of the basilisk,*" &c. These figurative expressions convey the same ideas, or nearly so, as are contained in the preceding line. *The eggs of the basilisk*, (See Critical Note) mean the thoughts, principles, and doctrines, of the persons spoken of, because these, like eggs, are the *embryos* of actions; for by *brooding*, as it were, upon a certain sort or train of thoughts, actions are at length produced: and the *spider's web*, signifies, their *good works*, as they conceived them to be, upon which they depended for acceptance with God. Now the *eggs of the basilisk*, it is clear, were considered as poisonous, causing *death*

to those who eat them. So then would their principles and doctrines lead to the eternal ruin of those who imbibed them. And as to their works, even those in which they most gloried, were evil, and would prove as insufficient to clothe *them with righteousness*, as the web of a spider to make a covering for their bodies. *Their webs would not become garments;* in other words, their *works* would profit them nothing.

"*They have made crooked paths,*" &c. Every deviation from the divine law, in the language of scripture, is a *crooked* path. God has in his word pointed out a *direct* way to eternal life, and we must not depart from it to follow courses of our own.

V. 9—15. "*Therefore judgment is far from us,*" &c. The third person is now changed for the second, which intimates a change in the speaker. In the former verses the prophet, in the name of Jehovah, had vividly depicted the sins of his people; in these, in the name of the pious remnant of the Jewish church, he bewails, and at the same time acknowledges the justice of, those evils which they suffered in consequence. But if we understand these words as coming from the truly pious, is not this to suppose them guilty of the sins just before mentioned? By no means. For although the prophet seems indeed to identify himself and the other pious Jews, with the rest, when he says, "*We looked for light,*" &c. it is only because he speaks collectively. The sense is, 'We Jews, *as a body*, are involved in spiritual darkness, because of our sins.' As an inhabitant of this country, although himself living consistently, and enjoying the consolations of religion, might say, in the time of any national calamity, 'We, Britons, are forsaken by God, and are punished for our sins.'

"*Judgment—justice*" have here nearly the same

meaning, both being acts of Jehovah. *Judgment* signifies, the judgment of God upon their enemies, vengeance; *justice* or *righteousness*, deliverance from persecution and affliction. The sense of the passage therefore is; "*Because of our sins, God does not judge our enemies, nor save us from our miseries.*"

"*In the midst of delicacies as among the dead.*" This passage is very obscure in the original, and has been interpreted in many different ways. According to the rendering I have adopted, which is that of Bishop Lowth, the meaning is, that the Jews, though enjoying the *highest spiritual privileges*, were yet as destitute of religious peace and consolation, as if they lived among those who were *spiritually dead*, that is, the Gentiles.

"*We look for judgment,*" &c. See above, verse 9.

"*For truth stumbleth in the streets,*" &c. Here there seems to be an evident reference to the trials which used to take place in the *gates*, or *streets* of the city, where the judges sat and determined causes. In these, *truth*, the balance of right and equity, ought to prevail. But it was not so with them.

"*Truth stumbled,*" &c. That is, neither truth nor equity were to be found in their courts, being prevented from entering by wicked men.

V. 15, 16. "*And Jehovah saw and was displeased,*" &c. Here the person is again changed from the first to the third, which intimates a change in the subject matter. These words therefore are not to be taken in connection with those immediately preceding, but are to be understood as having a general reference to what had gone before. Now it has been already observed, that the foregoing description is not to be restricted to any particular period in the Jewish history, but may be considered as descriptive of the nation from the time

of Isaiah to the coming of Christ. Indeed it is particularly applicable to the state of the Jews about the period of our Lord's appearing upon earth. The event then primarily alluded to in these verses is, I conceive, the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem, and to disperse the rebellious Jews over the face of the globe. For although there is a consolatory promise at the conclusion of the chapter, the general tenor of the prophecy is denunciatory. To use the words of Vitringa (although his view of the general meaning of the prophecy is entirely different from that which I have taken); "The Son of God is here introduced, and described, as a warrior prepared to enter upon a terrible combat; being clothed and adorned with a helmet, breast-plate, and cloak, and other armour; and prepared and animated to avenge the church with rigour."

My reasons for supposing that the coming of Christ to punish the wicked Jews and to destroy Jerusalem, is the principal thing referred to, are, First, Several parallel passages in the prophet, in which the event is spoken of in similar language: compare chap. lx. 1; lxv. 6, 7, 12—15. Secondly, The words of our Lord, Luke xxi. 22, where, speaking of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, he says, "*These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*" The days of vengeance, that is to say, or of just retribution, upon the apostate Jewish church. Thirdly, The general bearing of the prophecy, which is a denunciation against the nation of the Jews for their sins. See chap. lxiii. Such then being what I conceive the *scope* of the prophecy, it remains that I should now explain, upon this scheme, the meaning of particular parts.

"*And Jehovah saw,*" &c. What was it Jehovah saw,

and was displeased at? *That there was no judgment.* But judgment we have seen, in this prophecy, means judgment upon the enemies of God's church, or vengeance. The sense, therefore is, that Jehovah beheld with displeasure and grief, speaking after the manner of man, the persecuted and afflicted state of his church, and the triumphs of its enemies. In consequence of which he himself is represented as rising up, like an invincible warrior, by his own almighty power to vindicate and rescue it. Never perhaps was there a time when the true church of God seemed in such a perilous condition as at the period just previous to the incarnation of Christ. The wickedness of the Jews had then almost reached its height. The teachers of religion were equally ignorant and depraved with the people, and there was no man able or willing to save the sinking church. Therefore Jehovah himself undertook the work; and,

"*His righteousness sustained him.*" Supposing this refers to the execution of Jehovah's vengeance upon his rebellious people, the sense must be, that in this he acted in perfect consistency with those attributes of holiness, justice, and goodness, which are the essential perfections of his nature. Thus it is said, concerning the "WORD OF GOD," Rev. xix. 11. "*In righteousness doth he judge and make war.*" But if the reference be to the salvation of the righteous, as is perhaps the case, for both the one and the other are treated of in these verses, then the expression, "*His righteousness sustained him,*" must signify, that in accomplishing the work of redemption, the Son of God was sustained by that perfect and divine righteousness which was inherent in him.

V. 17. "*And he put on righteousness as a breastplate,*" &c. Those who are conversant with the style

and language of scripture cannot but be aware that it is a very usual thing for the sacred writers to express the qualities, dispositions, and feelings of the mind by parts of the dress of the body. Thus, *holiness* is called by our Lord the *wedding garment*. (Matt. xxii. 11.) St. Peter exhorts Christians to be *clothed* with humility. (1 Peter v. 5.) And St. Paul tells them to *put on* the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. xiii. 14.) Which passages intimate respectively that Christians must be *holy*, *humble*, and *like their Saviour*. So then here the *armour* in which Jehovah is described as being clad, the *breast-plate of righteousness*, the *helmet of salvation*, &c. signifies, that he was about to come, bringing salvation to his afflicted people, and executing just vengeance upon their enemies and oppressors.

V. 18. "*Lord of retribution*," &c. "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith Jehovah." (Rom. xii. 19.) God alone has the right and the power to inflict a just and sufficient punishment for any sins. He is therefore with the greatest propriety styled, "Lord of retribution, or recompense," because the punishment of sin belongs to him alone.

V. 19, 20. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the severe judgments inflicted upon those who had *crucified the Lord of glory*, were in two ways the means of making known the name of Jehovah throughout the earth. First, as affording a terrible example of his holiness, justice, and severity; and, Secondly, in as much as by them, the depositaries of the true religion, the preachers of the Gospel were scattered abroad more widely than they otherwise would have been.

"*For he shall come like a rushing river*," &c. The coming of the Lord to destroy Jerusalem is compared to the rushing of a vast river, straightened by its

channel, and impelled forwards by an impetuous wind, and thus rendered terrible and irresistible in its course. Such is the Son of God to all who oppose him; there is indeed no doubt a general reference here to his victory over every enemy, although I conceive his coming to destroy the wicked Jews, is the thing primarily intended. Compare Luke xvii. 24. The obscurity of the above passage in the original has given rise to a variety of discordant interpretations. See Critical Note.

"*But he shall come a Redeemer to Zion,*" &c. This exactly accords with what is said, chap. lxi. 1, which see. The Messiah was to come as a judge, and an avenger to the rebellious and unbelieving Jews; but as a *Redeemer* to *Zion*, the spiritual Israel, "*the remnant according to the election of grace.* And such is the general tenor of the New Testament, which throughout represents Jesus as the *Saviour only* of the humble and penitent; but as the Judge of the ungodly and wicked.

From the connection in which these words are quoted by St. Paul, Rom. xi. 26, it has been inferred that the conversion of the Jews in the latter days is here exclusively predicted. "I would not have you ignorant" says the Apostle, "of this mystery, that blindness, in part, hath happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." But it by no means follows from hence that the prophecy may not have had a partial fulfilment in those Jews who received Jesus as the Messiah in the Apostle's days. St. Paul's application of the text only shews that it yet remains to be accomplished in the fullest sense; and that the Jews as a people, will

be converted to the faith of Christ, when the whole number of the Gentiles ordained by God shall have been brought into the church.

V. 21. "*This is my covenant with them,*" &c. The substance of this promise is, that Jehovah will to the end of time, raise up faithful ministers in his church, endued with the Holy Spirit, who shall preach, and perpetuate from one generation to another, the pure doctrines of the Gospel. Or in other words, that the doctrines delivered by the Messiah to his Apostles when upon earth, shall constantly be taught in the church until the consummation of all things. One object of Dean Milner's Church History, is to prove that this promise did not fail, not even in the darkest ages; and whoever has read his History, must admit that he has clearly proved his point.

"*With them—upon thee.*" This shews that the promise is made to the church generally, and to individual members in particular. "With *them*," that is, all who believe, "upon *thee*," the church as a body.

REMARKS.

What is the prominent doctrine in this grand and striking appeal we have now been considering? Is it not this, that *sin* is the great barrier between us and God? That sin is the true source of ignorance, misery, and despair? Why is it that we possess so much less of the sensible comforts of religion than the primitive believers? so much less of that *joy unspeakable and full of glory*," of which the apostle speaks, than they? For that we *do* possess less of these is I think evident from this, that the writings of St. Paul and the other apostles, when they speak of the *joys* of the Christian,

seem to describe the feelings of a different order of beings from ourselves. Is then the Lord's hand shortened, that it cannot save; or his ear heavy, that it cannot hear? No, it is our iniquities that have separated between us and our God. Surely he is as capable of imparting spiritual pleasure to the soul now, as he was eighteen hundred years ago. It is not then that God is changed. It is not that his power is diminished. But it is that we by our worldly-mindedness and sin, are less capable of receiving the consolations of the Spirit, than the apostles and primitive believers. We have "a name to live and are dead." The Protestant churches of Christendom, it must be admitted, are nearly, if not quite as corrupt as the Jewish church was in the time of Isaiah. With all our privileges and means of knowledge, how small is the number of those whose lives are holy and consistent! How few are there who, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world;" expecting, and preparing for the glorious appearing of their God and Saviour! How many "whose God is their belly, and who mind only earthly things." Can we then look for the light of God's countenance? Can we expect the consolations of the Spirit? "Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold and visit thy church: quicken us, and we will call upon thee. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LIX.

(1) "*The basilisk.*" This was a serpent of a very venomous description, as appears from Jeremiah viii. 17. The exact species however is not known. As for the *cockatrice*, by which our translators have rendered the word, צפעוני, a creature supposed to be produced from the egg of a *cock*, brooded upon by a serpent, there is no such animal in existence, and therefore the translation is an improper one.

(2) "*Hire.*" פעלת has this meaning, chap. xl. 10.

(3) "*In the midst of delicacies,*" &c. Thus Bp. Lowth renders the passage: and something in the same way, Vitringa, "*In opimis rebus, ut mortui.*" Instead of באשמנים one MS. has בשמנים.

(4) "*Is plundered.*" The meaning of the word משתולל is doubtful. Some Jewish commentators render it, "*is accounted mad, or foolish.*" Perhaps the sense may be, *departure from evil, causeth a man to be esteemed foolish.* Sept. *και μετεςησαν την διανοιαν του συνιεναι.*

(5) ישתומם means literally *to wonder*, or *be astonished*. But when a person is *astonished* that a thing is not done, which he knows ought to be done, and wishes were done, he is also *grieved*.

(6) תלבשת is considered by Bp. Lowth to be an interpolation. It is not found in any of the ancient versions, and is certainly altogether redundant.

(7) "*Lord of retribution.*" It would, I conceive, only weary the reader's patience to little profit, to examine and sift thoroughly the various renderings and expositions which have been given of this passage. The fact is, that the text as it stands at present in our printed Bibles, is perfectly inexplicable. I have not, therefore, the smallest doubt, that instead of כעל, we ought to read בעל, as Bp Lowth suggests upon the authority of the Chaldee version. This correction makes so clear a sense, and the change in the letters is so trifling, that it commends itself at once as proper and justifiable. Vitringa's translation is a curious illustration of the extent to which an obstinate adherence to the received reading, may blind the understanding. It is to this effect; "Secundum summe merita, secundum summe merita rependet." Upon which

translation the Bishop justly remarks; "They that hold the present Hebrew text to be absolutely infallible, must make their way through it as they can: but they ought surely to give us somewhat that has at least the *appearance* of sense."

(⁸) For אִיִּים, *islands*, we should perhaps read אֹיְבִים, *enemies*. For it was not to inflict vengeance upon the islands, or distant coasts, that the Lord would come, but upon his rebellious people.

(⁹) This passage has caused me as much perplexity as any in Isaiah, nor do I now feel by any means certain as to its real import. Vitringa, and our translators, take צַר by itself, and render it, *the enemy*: but the former observes that almost all the ancient versions agree in connecting it with נָהָר, as if it signified *straightened*. Thus the Septuagint, ὡς ποταμὸς βιαιος; *as a violent, or rushing river*, PENT UP *in its channel*. So likewise Jerome, whose version is; "Quasi fluvius violentus veniet, quem spiritus Domini cogit." Upon the whole this translation appears to me to agree best with the context, and with the structure of the original. רוּחַ יְהוָה, *a wind from Jehovah*, is a mighty, or strong wind: and נוֹסָסָה, is the third person singular feminine in Pihel of נוּס, *to fly*; and signifies, therefore, *to cause to fly*, or *to drive along*.

(¹⁰) "*Them that turn from transgression in Jacob.*" This seems the obvious rendering of the passage as it now stands in the Hebrew, the particle מִ being understood before פֶּשַׁע. Compare Ezek. xviii. 28. St. Paul's quotation of these words, Rom. xi. 26, is according to the Septuagint translation, "και αποστρεψει ασεβειας απο Ιακωβ." They appear to have read, as Bishop Lowth conjectures, וְחָשִׁיב and מִיַּעֲקֹב, instead of לְשָׁבֵי and בְּיַעֲקֹב.

SECT. 55. CHAP. LX.

THE generality of commentators, and among these Vitringa and Bishop Lowth, consider the prophecy in this chapter to have reference chiefly to the state of the church in the latter ages, or during the Millennium. And undoubtedly the full accomplishment of the prophecy is reserved for future times. Yet I cannot but think that in a minor, or as it were *incipient* sense, all the things which are here foretold, have been fulfilled in the establishment of the Christian church. How the language may be so applied, I shall endeavour to shew in the following exposition. The contents of the chapter, in general terms, are:—promises to the church of an extraordinary measure of light and glory; of an immense increase in the number of her members; of exaltation in the eyes of her enemies; and of constant safety and happiness.

ISAIAH, Sect. 55. Chap. LX. 1—6.

1. Arise, shine; ([1]) for thy light is come;
   And the glory of Jehovah hath risen upon thee.
2. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, yea gross darkness the people;
   But upon thee shall Jehovah arise, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.
3. And the Gentiles shall walk by thy light, and kings by the brightness of thy rising.
4. Lift up thine eyes, and look around ([2]) thee;
   They all gather themselves together, and approach unto thee;
   Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at the side.
5. Then shalt thou fear, and be faint, ([3]) and thy heart shall tremble and be full; ([4])
   For the multitude of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee:
6. The abundance ([5]) of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
   All they from Seba shall come, and shall bring gold and incense;
   And shall proclaim with joy the praises of Jehovah.

7. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together for thee.
   The rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee;
   They shall come up with acceptance upon mine altar,
   And I will beautify the house of my glory.
8. Who are these that fly as a cloud; and like doves to their hiding places?
9. For the isles shall wait upon me, and the ships of Tarshish among the first;
   To bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them,
   To the name of Jehovah thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel;
   For he shall make thee beautiful.
10. And the sons of the stranger shall build thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee:
    For in my wrath I smote thee, but in my kindness will I have mercy upon thee.
11. And thy gates shall ever be open, neither day nor night shall they be shut;
    To bring in unto thee the strength of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought:
12. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish;
    Yea those nations shall be utterly laid waste.
13. The glory of Lebanon shall come to thee, the fir tree, the pine, and the box together;
    To beautify the place of my sanctuary, and that I may make glorious the place of my feet.

14. Also the sons of those who afflicted thee shall
come bending unto thee;
And all those who despised thee shall bow down
at the soles of thy feet.
And they shall call thee, The city of Jehovah,
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
15. Whereas thou wast forsaken and hated, and
none passed through thee,
I will make thee an eternal boast, a cause of joy
from generation to generation.
16. And thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles,
yea, the breasts of kings shalt thou suck;
And thou shalt know that I Jehovah am thy
Saviour,
And that thy Redeemer is the mighty one of
Jacob.
17. For brass I will bring gold; and for iron I will
bring silver;
And instead of wood, brass; and instead of
stones, iron.
And I will make thy rulers peace, and thine
exactors righteousness.
18. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land;
Nor destruction and ruin in thy borders:
But thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy
gates praise.
19. The sun shall no more be thy light by day,
Nor shall the moon shine upon thee for light
by night;
But Jehovah shall be to thee an everlasting light,
and thy God thy glory.

20. Thy sun shall set no more, nor shall thy moon wane;
For Jehovah shall be to thee an everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.
21. Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever;
The branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.
22. The least (7) shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation.
I, Jehovah, will speedily accomplish it at the appointed time.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LX. 1, 2.

V. 1, 2. "*Arise, shine.*" Jehovah here addresses his church, as in chap. lii. under the double emblem of a *mourning woman* and a *desolate city*. For a long period previous to the appearing of the Son of God upon earth it had been in so low and obscure a condition that its glory seemed almost gone, and that superior light which the people who composed it possessed above others, was nearly extinguished. But now brighter days are promised, and the church is called upon to arise from her obscurity, and reflect upon those around her the light she was herself about to receive from Jehovah. This promise began to be accomplished when the incarnate Saviour commenced his public ministry in the land of Judæa. At that time *darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.* Even the Jews, the *people* chosen by Jehovah to be the depositaries of the true religion, were almost as ignorant and depraved as their heathen neighbours. For it is to them, I conceive, that the words, "*and gross darkness the people,*" especially relate. Thus St. John; "The light shineth in darkness, i. e. *upon the darkened mind of the Jewish people,* and the darkness comprehended it not."[1] When, therefore, I say Jesus began to teach and to preach in Judæa, then according to the words

[1] John i. 5.

of Malachi, "*the Sun of righteousness arose upon the church with healing in his wings.*"[1] Or, in the words of St. Paul; "God who caused the light to shine out of darkness, then shone into the hearts of his believing people to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ."[2] The consequence was, that the church was pure in doctrine and practice, and *the glory of Jehovah was seen upon her.* The Christian church in Jerusalem, though small, shone with a lustre which has not since been equalled; the lives of its members being so holy that even their enemies could find no evil thing to say against them. The *glory of Jehovah* in this place means, I conceive, his image or perfections, such as love, purity, holiness, &c. which are always communicated to his true people, and reflected by them. Compare 2 Cor. iii. 18.

V. 3, 4. Was not this prediction fulfilled, or at least did it not begin to have its accomplishment, soon after the first rise of the Christian church? Thousands from among the Gentiles ere long *walked by its light;* that is, received the doctrines, and regulated their lives by the precepts of the gospel. In the course of a few years the emperor of Rome himself, and after him, many other *kings,* ostensibly, opened their eyes to the beams of the Christian sun. Then the church, in whatever direction she looked, whether to the east or to the west, to the north or to the south, beheld, as it were, her children *gathering themselves together, and coming unto her.*

"*Nursed at the side.*" The women in the east carry their children astride upon the hip, supporting them at the same time with the arm. There is evidently an allusion to this custom here. The meaning of the figure

[1] Malachi iv. 2. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

is, that the Gentiles would help forward rather than oppose the increase of the church.

V. 5. "*Then shalt thou fear,*" &c. This seems strange. Why should the church *fear* when she saw multitudes of faithful children coming to her? There is nothing however really paradoxical in this. On the the contrary, upon examination it will be found that nothing could be more appropriate than this representation of the feelings of the church. For the effect produced by sudden and unlooked for events, even though of the most gratifying kind, is not always unmixed pleasure; they are frequently accompanied also with a species of fear, arising, perhaps, from a doubt whether the good we seem so unexpectedly to have obtained, is not too great to be real. Or whatever may be the cause, the fact is certain; sudden joy is attended with the same effects as sudden terror. In both cases the blood rushes from the surface to the interior; the *heart* is unusually *dilated*, and *palpitates*; and a sense of *faintness* comes over the whole frame. With such feelings then the church is represented as beholding the sudden and vast increase of her members.

"*For the multitude of the sea,*" &c. That is, the multitudes who inhabit the distant sea coasts. Alluding particularly to the nations of Europe, whom the Jews were accustomed to consider chiefly as maritime people, because they were acquainted only with those parts which are washed by the Mediterranean Sea.

V. 6, 7. The conversion of the western nations was predicted in the preceding verse; in these the admission into the church of the people of the east is foretold. The general sense of the passage is, that the inhabitants of the several countries mentioned would cheerfully and unreservedly devote themselves and all their pos-

sessions to the service of Jehovah and his church. A few remarks may suffice upon the meaning of particular clauses.

"*The abundance of camels shall cover thee,*" &c.; i. e. they shall come unto thee in multitudes from the desert, and shall cover thee with their dust. The camel may in familiar language be called, *the life* of the Arabians. It is to them what the ox is to the English peasant, or the reindeer to the Laplander. It carries their burdens, supplies them with milk and clothing, and in short ministers to all their wants. Hence, when it is said, that the *camels and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah* should come to the church *bringing gold and incense,* this imports, that the inhabitants of those parts would themselves become her members, and consecrate the best of their possessions to her service.

"*All the flocks of Kedar,*" &c. The camels would bring *gold and incense* for the service of the church; the *flocks* and herds also would minister to it, by offering themselves up as willing victims.

"*They shall come up with acceptance upon mine altar.*" Vitringa understands this to mean, that they should go up upon the altar of their own accord, as if to offer themselves in sacrifice voluntarily; which idea, as Bishop Lowth observes, is very beautiful and elegant. Thus should the Christian present himself to God a *willing, holy, and living sacrifice.* Rom. xii. 1. For the reason why these events are predicted in language adapted rather to the Jewish than to the Christian worship, see note on chap. ii. 2—4.

Midian, Ephah, Kedar, and *Nebaioth,* were all places in Arabia. *Seba* is supposed to be the country from which the queen came who visited Solomon, and who, it is said, "brought camels, with spices, and precious stones, and much gold." 1 Kings x. 2. We read of the partial

accomplishment of the things here predicted in Acts ii. 1—11, where we are told, that "Cretes and *Arabians*, together with Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, spake, in the Jewish tongue the wonderful works of God."

V. 8. "*Who are these*," &c. Struck with astonishment at beholding the multitude of new converts flocking to her, the church is supposed to break forth into this sudden and abrupt inquiry. The two images indicate, respectively, the *number* of the converts, and their *eagerness* to be admitted into the church. The first being signified by a *cloud*, in allusion to the numerous drops of which it is composed; and the second, by the *flight of doves*, on account of its swiftness. Compare chap. xlix. 21.

V. 9. As the conversion of the eastern nations, and the devotion of themselves and their substance to the service of Jehovah, was predicted in the sixth and seventh verses, in which their camels and dromedaries are represented as bringing the most valuable productions of their respective countries for the use of the church; so here the same thing is foretold concerning the western nations, with reference to their *ships*, which constituted *their* riches and strength, as the camels, &c. did that of the others.

"*Tarshish*." See vol. i. p. 380.

V. 10. Compare chap. xlix. 17, 23, and liv. 7, and notes.

V. 11. "*Thy gates shall ever be open*," &c. The gates of the church of Christ stand open to all. None who sincerely desire admission shall ever be excluded from this spiritual Jerusalem, of whatever age, rank, or country they may be. The great Head of the church has for ever opened its gates to every repentant sinner in saying, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This appears

to be the primary import of these words; but see Remarks.

V. 12. The denunciation in this verse is against those nations to whom the gospel has been, or may be preached, but who refuse to *join* themselves to the church, and to *submit* to its laws. But has this denunciation been executed? Most certainly it has, and that in the most striking manner. Did not Jerusalem refuse to serve the church of Christ, and was it not in consequence miserably and utterly wasted? And may not the same be said of pagan Rome? In the terrible contest which took place in the empire between Christianity and heathenism, was not the former eventually triumphant? And were not those kings destroyed who would not submit to the yoke of Christ? However, no doubt the prophecy will yet be accomplished in a more signal and terrible manner. Let it be remembered that the denunciation applies equally as much to individuals as to nations.[1]

V. 13. *The glory of Lebanon* were the cedars for which that mountain was so celebrated. The *place of my sanctuary* means the temple; and the *place of my feet*, according to Vitringa, the ark of the covenant, upon which Jehovah was wont to rest in the cloud, the symbol of his glory. The reader scarcely need be told that all this is to be understood figuratively. The prophet multiplies images to shew the glory of that spiritual temple which Jehovah was about to raise. As the cedars of Lebanon, and other rare woods, were employed in the building of Solomon's literal temple, so would all the members of the church, which is the

[1] Are not the events which took place a few years ago in France a fearful exemplification of the truth of this prediction? May not the horrors of the Revolution be justly ascribed to the open blasphemy and impiety of the rulers of the nation at that period?

true temple of God (1 Cor. vi. 16), adorn it by the holiness and purity of their lives.

V. 14. In this verse there is a singular mixture of metaphors. "*They shall bow down at thy feet,*" &c. supposes a person to be addressed. "*They shall call thee the city of Jehovah,*" &c. a city:—this, I think, shews that the invisible mystical church is the subject of the prophecy throughout. The sense is, that those who had once hated and persecuted the church of Christ should now reverence it and seek its communion. And has not this been fulfilled in numberless instances? In fact, were not all those nations and kingdoms which now, professedly at least, seek the prosperity of the church, once its most bitter enemies and opponents?

V. 15. The condition of the church from the time of Malachi, the last of the prophets, to the period of the promulgation of the gospel, might be compared to that of a city *forsaken* by its inhabitants, and *hated* by its neighbours. *No man went through it.* So small was the number of true believers that they could scarcely be called anything: but after the establishment of Christianity in the world the case was far different. For although indeed those *born after the Spirit*, and who form the true church of Christ, were then, and still are, despised and hated by the world, and will be so to the end of time,[1] yet the church itself, regarded as a body, is revered and respected. The name and profession of Christianity are considered honourable and reputable; and, with a strange inconsistency, the world profess to reverence the church and adore its divine founder, whilst they regard those members who live according to its doctrines and precepts with contempt and aversion.

[1] Gal. iv. 29.

V. 16. See chap. xlix. 23.

V. 17. "*For brass I will bring gold,*" &c. These words intimate the superiority of the Christian dispensation to the Jewish. As gold excels brass, and silver iron; and brass itself is stronger than wood, and iron than stone; so the doctrines, the promises, and the ordinances of the gospel are far more excellent and glorious than those of the law. Thus St. Paul; "If the ministration of condemnation (*the law*) be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness (*the gospel*) exceed in glory." 2 Cor. iii. 9.

"*And I will make thy rulers peace,*" &c. The former of these, in a literal sense, mean the rulers and magistrates of a city or kingdom; the latter, the collectors of the revenue. The mystical and real import of the terms in this place is, that the ministers of the church, at the time referred to, should be peaceable and just, governing it with equity and truth. Therefore it is added, "*Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,*" &c. Compare chap. xxxii. 1, 2.

V. 18. "*But thou shalt call thy walls salvation,*" &c. That is, thy walls shall be so strong, that they shall ensure thy salvation; and thy gates shall be continually thronged with passengers, singing the praises of their God—they shall be *all praise.* The security and happiness of the church are thus predicted. But here I can imagine the reader ready to ask; 'And has this promise then been fulfilled? Will the church of Christ never be in a state of greater security and blessedness than it is at present?' Most assuredly it will. And therefore the prophecy remains yet to be accomplished in the fullest sense. Still I conceive that it relates, primarily, to the safety and happiness of the Christian church as opposed to the Jewish.

V. 19, 20. The *sun* and the *moon* are the means appointed by Jehovah for communicating light and warmth to the natural world by night and by day. Here they seem to be put emblematically for the *ordinances of religion*, by which we receive light and instruction. The import of these two verses, therefore, is, that the church, at the period alluded to, should be enlightened by Jehovah himself; referring, probably, to the indwelling of the Spirit in the soul of the believer, and the enlightening of the mind by his influences; which is the peculiar privilege promised by Christ to his church. Compare chap. xxx. 26, and Matt. xxviii. 20. John xiv. 16. The similarity between the language of these two verses, and Rev. xxi. 23, in which latter place we *know* the *future* and *final* glory of the church is described, is, however, sufficient argument against restricting the interpretation of this, or indeed any other part of the prophecy, to what has hitherto taken place.

V. 21. "*Thy people shall be all righteous,*" &c. Thus it is declared concerning the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 27. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." And so St. Peter; "We according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" 2 Pet. iii. 13. Still the promise holds good of the true church of Christ at all times, of which none can be *real* members, but those who are made righteous or holy by the new creative power of the Holy Spirit.

"*They shall inherit the land for ever.*" See Remarks, chap. lxv.

"*The branch of my planting,*" &c. How plain is it from hence, that the salvation of believers is altogether the work of God? The first principle of good is

implanted in them by him; and every holy desire is formed in their souls by his almighty power. In short, they are saved that he may be *glorified*. Our Lord has told us, that "*Every plant which his heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up;*" (Matt. xv. 13.) And his apostle declares, that "*We are* HIS *workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them;*" (Eph. ii. 10.) Can Christians then be unholy?

V. 22. "*The least shall become a thousand,*" &c. This implies, 'that the small remnant of God's people would, in the time of the church's glory, grow into a numerous spiritual seed; so that those believers who, on account of the smallness of their endowments, might seem least capable of producing such an effect, should nevertheless bring forth much fruit, and be enriched with a large spiritual offspring.' Vitringa. Did not this take place, when, by the preaching of a few unlearned and ignorant men, *thousands* were converted in one day; and when a few such, apparently, inefficient instruments going forth into the world were the *means* of making multitudes innumerable children of God and heirs of his kingdom? The apostle Paul himself alone, though *less than the least of all saints*, may be said to have become "a strong nation," in the countless fruits of his ministry.

"*At the appointed time.*" At the precise period, that is, fixed from eternity: "When the *fulness* of the time was come, God sent forth his Son—*to* redeem them that were under the law." Gal. iv. 4.

REMARKS.

In the preceding notes I have endeavoured to shew, that the prophecy contained in this section refers *primarily* to past events; to events which have already taken place in the church. I am, however, far from thinking that these events are to be regarded as the complete fulfilment of all the *great and glorious things* which are here *spoken of the city of God*. On the contrary, those very circumstances themselves are, in my opinion, to be considered as an earnest and pledge of the much greater blessings, and more happy times which are yet in reserve for the church. (See Preliminary Dissertation, p. 31.) Not, however, to anticipate here what I may have to say upon this subject in another place;[1] with reference to what we have already witnessed, I would ask the infidel and doubting Christian, whether we have not here a prophecy, the general meaning of which is clear, and the primary accomplishment certain? Have not millions of the Gentiles been brought to adore Jehovah, the God of the Jews? Has not the Mosaic dispensation been superseded by the Christian, which though built upon it, yet is in every way superior? And are not all these things plainly foretold in this chapter? Truly, "if men believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be converted though one should rise from the dead."

But it is a hopeless thing to reason with infidels. Let those who profess to believe, consider the in-

[1] See Remarks on Chap. lxv. and lxvi.

struction they may derive from this beautiful and encouraging prophecy. Are we not here taught that whatsoever we possess is to be dedicated to the service of Jehovah and his church? The camels of Arabia, the ships of Tarshish, and cedars of Lebanon, all are to be employed to adorn *the sanctuary of Jehovah*, and to make *the place of his feet* glorious. And does not this imply, that the Christian should devote his time, his talents, and his substance, to the edification of the church? "Ye are not your own," says the apostle, "for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." But do the generality of professed Christians act upon these principles? Is there now in the Church anything at all like the devotion of the primitive disciples, who "sold all that they had, and came and laid the price at the feet of the apostles?" Acts iv. 34. These were noble examples of devotion to God; and although circumstances are now different, and it is not possible we should imitate them altogether, yet are we to have the same *mind* as they had, and to consider, as they did, that all we have is his who has redeemed us. But if we are bound to lay ourselves out for the service of our Lord, shall we not consider it a duty to use some means for imparting the gospel to those who are ignorant of it? If to relieve a fellow-creature who is suffering from hunger and thirst of body, be a work acceptable to Christ, (Matt. xxv.) how much more must it be so to communicate the gospel, the source of eternal life, to the dark, dead souls of the heathen? Is not this duty indeed clearly implied in the first words of this prophecy? *Arise, shine*, is the command given to the church; and if, as a body, she be required to reflect light upon those who are in

darkness around her, so surely are all her members individually called upon, as far as in them lies, to do the same. The reasonableness and propriety of making some exertions to impart the light of the gospel to the heathen, is indeed now, happily, generally admitted. The only question is, as to the best means of effecting this great object. We may leave the decision of this question to each one's judgment. Only let us *do something:* remembering, that no society, constituted of human beings, can be altogether free from some mixture of sin, infirmity, and error.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LX.

(1) "*Shine.*" Bishop Lowth, "*be thou enlightened.*" But the authorized version is in my opinion preferable. אור in Kal may be either neuter or active. Gen. xliv. 3.

(2) Heb. "*Carry thine eyes round about thee, and behold.*"

(3) ונהרת Literally, "*and shalt flow.*" Meaning, thy blood shall flow to thy heart, as it does when a person is faint.

(4) "*Be full.*" The literal rendering of the Hebrew, as in the authorized version, is, *be enlarged;* but in English the idea is, I think, better expressed by the above translation.

(5) שפעת This word is found connected with the verb כסה Ezek. xxvi. 10. משפעת סוסיו יכסך אבקם "*From the abundance of his horsemen their dust shall cover thee.*" Both words seem to have precisely the same meaning in this place.

(6) לא יאסף *Shall not be gathered or contracted.*

(7) קטן and צעיר compared together in this manner, signify respectively the *least,* and the *less,* or *younger.* 2 Chron. xxi. 17. Gen. xxix. 26.

SECT. 56. CHAP. LXI.

THE glory of the church under the Christian dispensation was the subject of the prophecy in the preceding section; in this, Messiah himself is introduced, who declares the nature of his office, and the purpose for which he would come, verses 1—3; Jehovah then again takes up the discourse, and in a variety of expressive images predicts the honour that would come to the believing Jews through their Gentile converts to the gospel, verses 4—9; upon this the church herself is represented as celebrating the praises of Jehovah for all his mercies, verse 10; the chapter concludes with an assurance of the certain accomplishment of all these things.

As there cannot be the smallest doubt as to the application of the first three verses of this chapter, which evidently relate to the coming of Christ to preach the gospel, we may, I think, from hence infer, that the former chapter refers, primarily at least, to the state of the church about the same period. For is it to be supposed that the prophet would suddenly pass from speaking of the Millennium, to the first appearing of Christ among the Jews?

ISAIAH, SECT. 56. CHAP. LXI. 1—3.

MESSIAH.

1. The spirit of Jehovah (1) is upon me, for (2) he hath anointed me;
   To preach glad tidings to the meek hath he sent me, to bind up the broken-hearted;
   To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to the bound;
2. To proclaim the year of acceptance with Jehovah, and the day of vengeance of our God.
3. To comfort all that mourn, to console (3) the mourners of Zion;
   To give unto them, ornaments instead of ashes;
   The oil of gladness, for that of mourning;
   The garments of praise, for the spirit of heaviness.

JEHOVAH.

   And they shall be called, the trees of the righteous one;
   The planting of Jehovah, that he might be glorified.

4. And they shall build up the old wastes, they shall raise up the desolations of former times;
   And they shall renew the ruinous cities, the desolations of ancient days.
5. And strangers shall stand up and feed your flocks,
   And the sons of the alien shall be your husbandmen and vine-dressers:
6. And ye shall be called, the priests of Jehovah;
   Ministers of our God shall ye be named.
   Ye shall eat the substance of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye exult.
7. Whereas your shame was double, and disgrace, cried they, is their portion; (4)
   Therefore in their land ye shall inherit double, everlasting joy shall be unto you.
8. (For I, Jehovah, love judgment, hating robbery for burnt-offering.)
   And I will give them a sure reward, (5) and will make an everlasting covenant with them.
9. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring in the midst of the people:
   All they that see them shall acknowledge, that they are the seed Jehovah hath blessed.

THE CHURCH.

10. I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall exult in my God;
    For he hath clothed me in garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness,

As a bridegroom putteth (6) on glorious attire,
and as a bride adorneth herself with her
apparel.

PROPHET.

11. For as the earth putteth forth her shoots, and
a garden maketh its seed to spring up,
So the Lord, Jehovah, will cause righteousness
and praise to spring up before all the nations.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LXI. 1—3.

V. 1—3. WHEN Jesus stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth, and there was delivered to him the book of the prophet Isaiah, he opened it at this place; and having read the first two verses of the chapter, he closed, or rather *rolled up*, the book, and commenced his discourse from them by saying; "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in our ears;*" (Luke iv. 16—21.) We cannot err, therefore, in applying the prophecy to him, nor is there any difficulty in shewing how the terms and emblems made use of are descriptive of the nature and character of his gospel.

"*The Spirit of Jehovah is upon me,*" &c. That Jesus was *anointed* with the *Holy Spirit*, and *sent* by his heavenly Father to *preach glad tidings* to the *meek*, that is, to proclaim pardon and salvation to those sensible of their sinfulness and unworthiness, is so generally declared or implied in the gospels, and throughout the New Testament, that it is almost unnecessary to make any particular references. The reader may compare Matt. v. 5. xi. 28. Luke vii. 47. Also, Notes on chap. xi. 2, and xlii. 1—4; where he will find an explanation of the sense in which Christ, although the eternal Son of God, is said to be *anointed* with the Spirit, and *sent*.

"*Liberty to the captives,*" &c. The declaration of our Lord to the Jews, John viii. 34, furnishes a key to

the meaning of these words; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin; but if the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed." Hence we learn, that the *captives* to whom Christ came to give liberty, the *prisoners* whom he came to set free, are those who have been taken captive by Satan, and are *bound with the chain of their sins.*

"*To proclaim the year of acceptance,*" &c. There is here, no doubt, an allusion to the year of jubilee, or of the sounding of the trumpet, from the Hebrew word signifying a trumpet, which occurred every fiftieth year, when a trumpet was sounded throughout the land of Judæa, and proclamation was made, that all persons should rest from labour, all slaves be set free, and all debts remitted. (Lev. xxv. 8.) Thus Christ also proclaimed rest, deliverance, and pardon.

"*And the day of vengeance,*" &c. The proclamations made by our Lord, of forgiveness and eternal life to the humble and penitent, were accompanied with the most fearful denunciations of the divine judgments upon hardened sinners. In fact, we shall find that the promises and threatenings generally attend each other, and where life is promised to the righteous, eternal death is denounced upon the wicked. See Matt. xxv. 46. Mark vi. 16. John iii. 15—19. There is, however, perhaps, a particular reference here to the terrible denunciations uttered by Christ against the unbelieving Jews. Luke xxi.

"*The mourners of Zion.*" Such was Mary Magdalen, who came to Jesus and washed his feet with her tears. Such was the poor publican, who dared not lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast. And such are all those who feel sin a burden, and groan under it, longing to be delivered. Reader,

do you know what it is to mourn for sin? How, if not, can you look for consolation? "Blessed, says our Saviour, are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

"*Ornaments instead of ashes,*" &c. Thus beautifully does the Holy Spirit by the prophet represent the joy and gladness with which the cordial reception of the doctrine of Christ fills the heart. The Jews were accustomed to express deep sorrow by putting ashes upon their heads, and clothing themselves in mean attire; perhaps also they used to anoint themselves with fœtid oil; at least there seems to be an allusion to something of the kind in this place. The words of Christ then to the mourning soul, are like *a beautiful diadem*, and *perfumed oil*, and *rich attire*, to one in such a condition as the above. They take away sorrow, and cause the lips to break forth in praise.

"*That they may be called trees of the righteous one,*" &c. This metaphor is introduced in so sudden and abrupt a manner, that I think it can scarcely refer to the words immediately preceding, but is connected rather with verse 21 of the last chapter. On this ground I suppose a change in the speaker.

V. 4. Compare chap. xlviii. 8, and lviii. 12.

V. 5, 6. "*Strangers shall stand,*" &c. No one can imagine that these words are to be taken in a strictly literal sense. In describing the glory of the Christian Church the Spirit seems to dictate to the mind of the prophet almost every metaphor that nature affords. The thing here predicted is the enlargement and edification of the Church, through the instrumentality of ministers and teachers from among the Gentiles. The different Christian churches scattered throughout the world, are so many *flocks*, or *vineyards*, or *buildings*,

(for the sacred writers employ all these emblems to designate the church); and their ministers, consequently, may be termed figuratively, shepherds, husbandmen, &c. (See Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 9.) But *strangers* mean the Gentiles. The sense of the passage therefore is, that *Gentiles* should become ministers of the Church. And who does not know that this has come to pass?

"*And ye shall be called,*" &c. This Vitringa thinks refers to that peculiar respect and reverence which the Gentile Bishops and Elders of the church, paid to the apostles and other preachers of the gospel from among the Jews, whose authority they acknowledged, and whom they venerated as their masters, and as the chosen ministers of the Lord Jesus.

"*And ye shall eat the substance of the Gentiles,*" &c. See notes chap. lx. 5—16.

V. 7. "*Whereas your shame was double,*" &c. The Jews, in all their reverses and captivities, have always suffered more *shame* and ignominy than any other people, as indeed it was predicted they should do; (Deut. xxviii.) and their enemies have ever insulted them with mockery and taunts.—(Psalm cxxxvii. 7.) But have they not since obtained a *double inheritance,* and *joy* more than double their shame, in being chosen to be the instruments of communicating the blessings of the Gospel to the Gentiles? The *inheritance* therefore promised is not an inheritance of *land,* but of *persons.*—(Compare Psalm ii. 8. 1 Thess. ii. 19.) If any one however think that hereafter this promise shall have a more definite accomplishment when the Jews shall be converted, I am ready to admit it may be so.

V. 8. "*For I Jehovah love judgment,*" &c. These words, which are introduced parenthetically, shew *why* Jehovah would bless his people under the gospel.

Because they would be *holy* and *sincere*, he being a God who *loves* righteousness and *hates* hypocrisy. *Judgment* seems here to mean righteousness in general, comprehending all that we owe to God and man.

"*Hating robbery*," &c. That is, abominating sacrifices, however costly, which are procured by iniquitous means. Compare chap. i. 13.

"*And I will give them a sure reward*," &c. We may consider this as a promise to believers generally, and more especially to the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, that their labours and sufferings for Christ's sake shall not be in vain. Jehovah engages, upon the faithfulness of his word, amply to recompense them, and to make their labours effectual. The addresses to the seven churches (Rev. ii. and iii.) afford an illustration of this passage.

V. 9. "*Their seed shall be known*," &c. Or, in other words; 'The converts of their ministry from among the Gentiles shall be known and acknowledged as the true children of God, the holiness and harmlessness of their lives testifying that they are indeed blessed by him." Do we not recognise the accomplishment of this promise in the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians? "Ye, says he, are our epistle, *known* and *read* of all men." 2 Cor. iii. 2. See also 1 Cor. iv. 15. ix. 2. and Philip. ii. 15. In fact, are not all real Christians, in some sense, the spiritual seed of those few Jews who "went forth into all the world to preach the gospel?"

V. 10. The church herself is here introduced, rejoicing and exulting in the favours of her God. Nothing I think can prove more clearly that the church *abstractedly*, not the Jewish or Gentile church *distinctively*, and that *spiritual* not *temporal* blessings, are intended throughout the chapter, than the character,

of this thanksgiving, which is altogether for mercies of a spiritual nature. The church's ground of praise is, that Jehovah had clothed her in the *garments of salvation*, &c.; and what are these garments of salvation, and this robe of righteousness, but those internal graces with which Christ adorns the soul of the believer, and that spotless perfect righteousness which he as it were throws over him that he may be fit to be an inheritor of the heavenly kingdom? Compare Matt. xxii. 11. Rev. xix. 8.

V. 11. "*For as the earth putteth forth her shoots,*" &c. The prophet, or perhaps Messiah, for it does not seem to me very clear by whom these words are spoken, here confirms the declaration of Jehovah in verse 9. The sense is, that as the earth, or a well-cultivated garden, by tillage, brings forth plants and herbs, so also would Jehovah by his blessing cause *righteousness* and *praise* to spring up in the church; i. e. persons who should be righteous in their lives, and speak his praises with their mouths, magnifying him continually in the sight of all nations.

REMARKS.

Having in the preceding notes adverted to that state of mind which is essential to the cordial reception of the doctrines of Christ, as explicitly described in the first two verses of this chapter, I shall confine these remarks to one doctrine, that of *imputed righteousness*, which I conceive is contained, or at least implied, in the song of thanksgiving supposed to be uttered by the church in verse 10.

It has long been a question whether this doctrine be an essential part of the gospel or not; some

maintaining that it is clearly revealed, and others denying that there is any foundation for it in scripture. In considering this question, the first thing to be determined is, the *meaning* of *imputed* righteousness. For perhaps in this instance, as in many others, the prejudices entertained against the doctrine may, in a great measure, be owing to a misapprehension of terms. Some persons seem to imagine that when we say, the Christian is *justified* by the *imputed righteousness* of Christ, we mean that *his* righteousness is alone necessary for our salvation; or, in other words, that his having obeyed the law renders our obedience unnecessary. There cannot, however, be a greater perversion of the doctrine than this. We do indeed affirm, that the fulfilment of the whole law by the Son of God in human nature is *imputed* to those who believe for their justification or acquittal from its demands; that is, that his obedience is considered as equivalent to their own personal obedience; so that all believers may be said to have obeyed in him, in the same sense as all mankind are declared to have sinned in Adam. And is not this in effect to say, that our own obedience is not required? For if Christ's perfect and complete obedience to the law be imputed to us, how can any further fulfilment on our part be necessary? I answer, that indeed no such fulfilment on our part is required, as a *meritorious* obedience, or as the ground of our acceptance, and of our claim to eternal life; nevertheless good works are necessary to the Christian in order to his being saved; rather they are essential accompaniments of real faith, springing from gratitude and love, and other holy dispositions and principles implanted in the soul at the same time with faith. So in fact it is. 'We are justified, or accounted righteous, only by the merits of our Lord

and Saviour Jesus Christ.' (Article 11. Church of England.) Yet every one who believes will have the *love of sin* taken out of his heart, and the love of holiness implanted in its stead. Consequently, he will *love righteousness, and hate iniquity;* he will yield a cheerful and ready obedience to the will of God; and, to use the words of the apostle John, "he will purify himself, even as his Saviour is pure." (1 John iii. 3.) Thus the doctrine of imputed righteousness by no means makes void that of *sanctification*. They are two distinct things, although necessarily conjoined; and the one is no more incompatible with the other, than strength is incompatible with beauty. As far as regards *merit*, we can hope for eternal life only through, and on account of, the righteousness or obedience of Christ; but with respect to *meetness* for the enjoyment of the kingdom of God, that must depend upon our own intrinsic holiness and purity. But all this does not prove that the doctrine of imputed righteousness is contained in the New Testament. A reference, however, to Rom. v. 12—19, and 1 Cor. i. 30, must, it seems to me, put the matter beyond dispute. At least, whoever does not see the doctrine in these passages, especially the former, will not, I think, find it any where else. But some may ask, supposing the doctrine to be a scriptural one, is it, after all, of any great importance? Undoubtedly if it be revealed it is of importance, or it would not have been revealed. That a person may be saved without having any very clear and distinct ideas upon the subject, who would deny? Yet surely it must be admitted, that those who feel the imperfection of their *best* services, and the number of their sins, of omission if not of commission, of thought if not of deed, can hardly attain in this life to that *full assurance of hope*,

of which St. Paul speaks, unless they look to their Saviour for justification, and not to themselves. What confidence, what *hope*, I say, can those who are aware of their short comings, have, unless they believe that the perfect obedience of Christ is imputed to their account? In this point of view, then, the doctrine is important, and deserves the attentive consideration of us all. At the same time we must beware lest we should be beguiled into a false security, under the impression that being *justified* by the righteousness of Christ we are freed from the necessity of a *ready* and *active* obedience to the will of God in all things.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LXI.

(1) Several MSS. read יהוה אלהים, and one omits אדני. The Septuagint is simply πνευμα κυριου.

(2) Whether יען is to be connected with לבשר or to be taken absolutely by itself, appears to me doubtful. I think, however, the latter manner of construing it is most agreeable to the structure of the Hebrew. The word יהוה is not repeated in one MS. nor is it noticed by the Septuagint.

(3) לשום. "*To appoint.*" But to appoint what? Either some word has been lost from the text, or שום must signify by itself, *to administer consolation*, as is clear from the context.

(4) "*Disgrace, cried they, is their portion.*" This is Vitringa's rendering, and seems to be confirmed by the affix ם to ארץ in the next line: "*their* land;" whose land but the land of those who cried, *disgrace be their portion?*

(5) Literally, "*a reward in truth.*" See chap. xl. 10.

(6) Heb. "*Adorneth himself as a priest with,*" &c.

SECT. 57. CHAP. LXII.

THE subject of the former section is here continued. Messiah declares his care of the Church, which he would not cease to instruct, either personally or by his ministers, until the promises made to it were fully accomplished, verse 1; these promises are repeated, with the addition of new ones, verses 2—5; Jehovah then declares that he would raise up in the Church a continual succession of faithful ministers, who are styled, *watchmen*, verse 6; these are exhorted to pray with perseverance to Jehovah, in dependance upon his promises, verses 7—9; and then, beholding multitudes coming into the Church, they are represented as exhorting and encouraging them to enter, verses 10, 11; a blessing upon the true members of the Church, and a prediction of their exaltation in the eyes of the Gentiles, concludes the chapter.

ISAIAH, Sect. 57. Chap. LXII. 1—5.

MESSIAH.

1. For Zion's sake I will not keep silence, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest,
   Until her righteousness go forth as a shining light, and her salvation as a burning torch.

PROPHET.

2. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory;
   And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.
3. And thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah,
   A royal diadem in the palm of thy God.
4. It shall no longer be said of thee, She is forsaken!
   Nor concerning thy land shall it be said, It is desolate!
   For thou shalt be called, "My delight is in her;"
   And thy land, "The married wife:"
   For Jehovah shall delight in thee, and thy land shall be wedded.
5. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, shall thy restorer marry thee;

And as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride,
shall thy God rejoice over thee.

JEHOVAH.

6. I have placed upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,
those who keep watch,
All the day, and all the night long.

PROPHET.

Let them never be silent who put Jehovah in
remembrance.

7. Keep not silence yourselves, neither give him rest,
Until he establish, and make Jerusalem, a praise
in the earth.

8. Jehovah hath sworn by his right hand, and his
strong arm,
I will no more give thy corn to be food for
thine enemies,
Nor shall the sons of the stranger any more
drink the new wine for which thou hast
laboured:

9. For they that reap the corn shall eat it, and praise
Jehovah;
And they that gather the vintage, shall drink it
in my holy courts.

WATCHMEN.

10. Pass on, pass on, through the gates; prepare the
way of the people!
Throw up, throw up, the high way, clear it of
stones;
Lift up a standard in the sight of the nations!

11. Behold Jehovah hath caused it to be heard to the
end of the earth;

"Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy Saviour cometh!
Behold his reward is with him, and his wages before him."

PROPHET.

12. And men shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of Jehovah:
And thou shalt be called, The sought out, The city not forsaken.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LXII. 1, 2.

V. 1. "*For Zion's sake,*" &c. These, I conceive, are the words of the Messiah, who had already been personally introduced in the beginning of the last chapter. *Zion* and *Jerusalem*, as in other parts of this prophecy, are of course to be understood mystically, and signify the Church of Christ. The Saviour then here declares that he would not cease either personally, or by his ministers, as his instruments, continually to teach and preach, until the *holiness* of the Church, and the *salvation* to be found in her, should be made manifest to the world, so that she should resemble a *bright light*, shining in darkness. When Christianity triumphed over heathen superstition and idolatry, and rose upon their ruins, then the Church *began* to shine, but it has not yet attained its meridian splendour. Compare chap. lx. 1.

V. 2. This and the four following verses, I attribute to the prophet, because the Church is addressed in the second person, whilst in the former verse, in which Messiah speaks, she is addressed in the third; they are in fact connected with the last verse of the preceding chapter, and are a continuation of the prophet's address.

"*And thou shalt be called by a new name,*" &c. According to the Hebrew phraseology, this implies, that the condition of the Church would be altered and

improved. For among the Jews to say that such a person "should be called by a new name," would intimate that their circumstances were about to undergo a change, either for the better or worse. Thus Naomi says, "Call me not Naomi, *(pleasantness)* but call me Mara *(bitterness)*" Ruth i. 20. May there not however be an intimation here of the change that was about to take place in the name of God's people, who were no longer to be called *Jews*, but *Christians?* There is certainly something remarkable in the manner in which St. Luke states the circumstance, Acts xi. 26.

V. 3. The condescension and love of Jehovah, the eternal God, are beautifully set forth in this verse. It is certain that, "He needeth not anything of his creatures; seeing he giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things." (Acts xvi. 25.) Yet he is represented as regarding his Church with complacency and satisfaction, as a man would look upon a royal crown, beautiful with gold and precious stones. It should be observed, it is not said that the Church would be a crown upon the *head* of Jehovah, this would have been to exalt it too high, and derogatory to the majesty of God. No exception of this kind can be made against the language of the prophet.

V. 4, 5. When God permitted Jerusalem, the seat of his visible church, to be captured and destroyed, and the land of his people to be devastated, first by the Chaldeans, and, afterwards, by the Romans; the Church was like a woman *forsaken* by her husband, or like one whose husband was dead and she left a *desolate* widow. Not that he did really ever forsake his Church, but it might *appear* so in the eyes of mankind when he permitted such things to befal it. Hence the general import of this promise is, that Jehovah would never allow the Church, after the establishment of Christianity,

to be reduced to the same state of desolation and nothingness as it had been previously; but would protect it always, and continually add to its numbers and strength; and so far, certainly, the promise has not failed. However, the accomplishment of this, as of most other prophecies, is *progressive;* and then only will the Church, in the fullest sense, deserve the name of "*Hephzi-bah*" *(my delight is in her)* when she shall be free from all hypocrites, and unholy members, and the Lord shall dwell in the midst of his people. Compare Eph. v. 27. Rev. xix. 7.

V. 6. "*I have placed upon thy walls,*" &c. The *watchmen* of a city were persons stationed upon its walls to guard it, and give notice of the approach of danger. The *watchmen* of the Church therefore are its ministers, who are appointed by Jehovah to be the guardians of its safety by preaching the true doctrines of the gospel, and giving warning against false ones. A constant succession of such persons is here promised by God himself. And does not this shew plainly, that the state of the Church *militant* is referred to? For what occasion for watchmen to the Church triumphant? Thus also the apostle; "And he hath given some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; for the perfecting of the saints," &c. Eph. iv. 2.

"*Let them never be silent,*" &c. The ministers of the Church are exhorted by the prophet not to cease to importune and supplicate Jehovah, until he should have accomplished his promises, and have made the Church glorious in the earth.

"The image in this place is taken from the Temple service; in which there was appointed a constant watch, day and night, by the Levites; and among them this seems to have belonged particularly to the

singers; see 1 Chron. ix. 33. The cxxxivth Psalm gives an example of the temple watch. The whole Psalm is nothing more than the alternate cry of two different divisions of the watch." Bishop Lowth.

"*Who put Jehovah in remembrance.*" That is, who remind him of his promises to his people. Compare Luke xviii. 7, and Rev. vi. 10.

"*A praise in the earth,*" or, an object of praise; the Church having been hitherto regarded as an object of contempt and aversion.

Does not this exhortation apply to us? Does it not teach us that we should constantly supplicate God to bless the labours of Missionaries, and indeed of all ministers, that the Church may increase and be glorified?

V. 8, 9. "*I will no more give thy corn,*" &c. It would be preposterous to understand these expressions literally, when all the rest of the prophecy is so plainly to be taken in a figurative sense. At first sight indeed the language may seem hardly capable of being interpreted figuratively; there is, however, no real difficulty in such an application of it. *Corn* and *wine* are well-known emblems for spiritual benedictions. Psalm lxxii. 16: Jer. xxxi. 12. And although these are the free gift of God, and cannot in strict propriety be said to be procured *by labour;* yet may the words under consideration be understood in a general sense to import, that the Church would peaceably enjoy its ordinances and religious privileges, to the confirmation and growth of its members. Compare chap. xxx. 23; xlv. 8, and Deut. xii. 17. In fact, the thing predicted is a *state of great prosperity* to the Church, which is foretold in language that would be suitable in describing the temporal prosperity of the Jews in Canaan; and was indeed literally fulfilled after their return from Babylon.

V. 10. "*Pass on, pass on,*" &c. To understand this part of Isaiah's prophecies, the reader must have before his eyes, the Church of God, under the figure of a strongly fortified city, having lofty walls, with numerous watchmen placed here and there upon them, both to guard against the sudden attacks of enemies, and to invite and welcome friends. These watchmen then, or ministers of the Gospel, beholding vast multitudes crowding into the gates of the city, or in other words, seeking to enter into the Church, call out to them to *pass on* and enter without fear or delay, that they might thus make room for those behind them. Then addressing others at a distance, they bid them cast up a high way, leading directly to the city, and to take out of it whatever could in any way impede the progress of passengers; also to *lift up a standard* to be as a beacon to direct those who were afar off. All which imagery is intended to teach us that those who have themselves entered into the Church of Christ, and know its privileges and blessings, should use every means of which they are capable to bring others in, and to help them forwards. See Hebrews xii. 13.

V. 11. Here the ministers of the Gospel declare that they were commanded to make known the glad tidings of salvation by the promised Saviour, not to the nation of the Jews only, but to all the inhabitants of the earth. And does not this perfectly accord with the commission of our Lord to his apostles? "Go ye, said he, into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel." Mark xvi. 15. Compare chap. xl. 10.

V. 12. "*And men,*" that is, the Gentiles, "*them,*" the members of the Church; and "*thou,*" the Church itself. Consequently, this is a prediction of the respect and honour which the Church and its members should receive after the coming of the Messiah. St. Peter

speaks in much the same terms of Christians. 1 Epistle ii.

"*The city not forsaken.*" In the East Indies it is not uncommon to see large towns entirely forsaken by their inhabitants, the outer walls only, and a few ruinous houses, remaining. Such once was the condition of the Church, but Jehovah here promises it should be so no more.

REMARKS.

This prophecy seems peculiarly calculated for the instruction and encouragement of the ministers of religion. They being the *watchmen* whom Jehovah has appointed for the protection and safety of his Church; it becomes them as such, *individually*, to make that portion he has assigned them the especial object of their care; or rather, I should say, comparatively, the *sole* object. The Christian minister should ever bear in mind that it is *his* business, whilst upon earth, to contribute, according to the ability bestowed upon him, to the enlargement and spiritual prosperity of the Church of Christ. And whilst the physician who regards the healing diseases of the body to be *his* office, devotes all the powers of his mind and gives up all his time to the study of medicine; whilst the counsellor bends all his thoughts to the intricacies of law, and readily submits to the drudgery of poring over pondrous folios utterly destitute of elegance and interest, in order that he may obtain eminence in his profession; shall not the minister of Christ, much more, dedicate with cheerfulness all the faculties of his mind, and all the energies of his soul, to the work *he* has taken in hand? Shall he not, according to the direction

of the apostle, "be instant in season and out of season?" Shall he not "meditate upon these things, and *be wholly* in them?" It is certainly a strange anomaly, that whilst the physician and the lawyer give themselves up almost exclusively to the pursuit of their respective professions, without its being thought anything extraordinary, if a minister of the Gospel devote his time solely to the promotion of true religion, he is considered as a wonderful man; and whilst the former willingly resign the sports of the field, and most of the recreations of life, the latter cannot be brought to renounce even those which are most dissipating to the mind, and altogether incompatible with his duty. It would, perhaps, be useful to every one who has taken upon him the office of the ministry, to read frequently the third chapter of Ezekiel, and the twenty-fifth of Matthew. In how fearful a light do these passages exhibit our responsibility as ministers of the Church?

SECT. 58. CHAP. LXIII. 1—6.

THE following short section contains a scenical representation, in which two persons are introduced, the Church, and Messiah, who appears as a mighty warrior returning victorious over his enemies, and bedewed with their blood.

Various are the expositions which have been given by commentators of the meaning and scope of this, evidently, symbolical prophecy. Vitringa observes, that Tertullian, Origen, Jerome, and in short all the ancient Fathers, understood the vision to have reference to the *sufferings* and *death* of Christ. But this application is entirely foreign to the whole scope of the prophecy which clearly sets before us the subject of it not as a sufferer, but as a *triumphant conqueror*, stained, not with his *own* blood, but with the blood of his enemies. In fact, the language is in no respect suitable to Messiah as a sufferer.

The interpretation given by Vitringa, and by most modern commentators, has a greater appearance of probability. By Edom he would understand the territory belonging to papal Rome; and by Bozrah, Rome itself. And according to this view, the subject of the prophecy is the same as that of Rev. xiv. 18, and xix. 12. viz; the judgments which shall be executed upon papal Rome and its adherents. But an insuperable objection, in my mind, to this interpretation is, that it seems to destroy all connexion between these verses and the preceding and following; as if they formed an isolated prophecy by themselves. And such indeed is Bp. Lowth's idea, who says, "The very remarkable passage with which this chapter begins, seems to me to be in a manner detached from the rest, and to stand singly by itself;" &c. This, certainly, does not appear very probable. Is it not at least more reasonable to suppose that these six verses are connected with the context than that they form a detached prophecy by themselves?

After carefully revolving these, and other expositions of the passage which it is unnecessary to notice, it occurred to me, that it might refer primarily to the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem and punish the apostate Jews. This opinion is founded upon the following considerations:—

1st. Because of the similarity between the expressions in the fifth verse, and those in chap. lix. 16, which see.

2ndly. Because our Lord in Luke xxi. 28. speaks of his coming to destroy Jerusalem, as being the day of *vengeance* upon his enemies, but of *redemption* to his people; and so it is represented here, verse 4.

3rdly. Because this interpretation agrees with the context better than any other, and makes out a clear connection between this, and the preceding and succeeding prophecies. The prophecy in section 56 and 57, describes the conversion of the Gentiles to the Church; and after the section we are considering, follows a lamentation of the Jews on account of them being cast out. Can anything be more appropriate then than this symbolical prediction of their destruction in this place?

But it may be objected; Can Edom and Bozrah, mean Judæa and Jerusalem? Can we think that God would thus designate the beloved city? There does, I grant, appear some force in this objection; but it does not strike me as being conclusive and unanswerable. We know that Sodom, chap. i. 10, means Jerusalem; why may it not also be called Bozrah on the same grounds? or can any cause be shewn why Jerusalem should not be so called, as well as Rome be called Babylon in the New Testament?

Further, Edom, or Esau, was a typical person, being the first-born son who was supplanted by his brother Jacob. He was therefore in this respect a type of the Jews, who were the first-born children of God but were supplanted by the Gentiles.

These then are the reasons upon which the following exposition is founded. At the same time I readily acknowledge that they are by no means decisive, and therefore I do not propose it without much diffidence.

Isaiah Sect 35 Chap LXII. 1—4.

THE CHURCH

1 Who is this that cometh from Edom with
dyed garments?
This that is glorious in his apparel?
Travelling in the greatness of his strength?

MESSIAH

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to
save.

THE CHURCH

2 Wherefore is thine apparel red, and thy gar-
ments like him that treadeth in the wine
vat?

MESSIAH

3 I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people
there was no man with me:
Yea, I have trodden them in mine anger, and
trampled them in my wrath:
And their blood is hath sprinkled my garments,
and I have stained all my raiment:
4 For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and
the year of my redeemed is come.

5. And I looked, and there was no helper, and
I was grieved (3) that there was no one to
uphold;
Therefore mine own arm wrought salvation for
me, and my wrath sustained me.
6. And I have trodden the people in mine anger,
and destroyed (4) them in my wrath,
And have spilled their blood upon the earth.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LIII. 1, 2.

V. 1. "*Who is this that cometh from Edom?*" &c. The structure of this section is purely dramatical. A company of persons, representing the Church, behold the Son of God returning from the destruction of Jerusalem in the character of a victorious warrior covered with the blood of his enemies, and clothed as a king in royal apparel. Struck with the majesty of his appearance, they inquire with emotions of surprise and terror, *Who is this?* &c. The idea is grand and beautiful. Such a representation is far better calculated to impress the mind with an awful conception of the power and justice of Jehovah, than any narration.

"*I that speak in righteousness,*" &c. In reply to the above question, the divine conqueror answers in these words, the import of which is, that he was come from executing that *righteous vengeance* upon his enemies he had threatened long ago, for he *spoke* not anything in vain. But as he was able thus to execute righteous judgment upon his enemies, so was he also *mighty to save* those his faithful servants, who put their trust in him.

V. 2. *Thy garments as of him that treadeth in the wine press.*" This is said in allusion to the manner of expressing the juice of grapes for the purpose of making wine; which was usually done by men, who trampled upon and crushed them with their feet. It is

obvious that persons so employed must inevitably be literally *dyed* with juice. Thus Messiah appeared dyed with blood. The same image is employed, Rev. xiv. 20.

V. 3—6. "*I have trodden the vat,*" &c. The city of Jerusalem, at the time it was besieged and taken by the Romans, was filled with men of the most impious and abandoned characters. The Christians had withdrawn from it according to the directions of our Lord; (Matt. xxiv. 16.) and the leading persons, and indeed the generality of the people, were more horribly wicked, if we may credit Josephus,[1] than we can conceive. Thus Jerusalem was as a *wine vat*, and its inhabitants, like grapes, ripe for destruction. But what is the meaning of the declaration; "I have trodden the vat *alone*," &c. It was the Romans and not the Son of God in person who destroyed Jerusalem and its inhabitants; but this would seem to imply that he was to be the sole agent? We must remember, however, that the structure of this prophecy is purely dramatical and highly figurative; events are rather represented than described. The Romans were only instruments employed by Jehovah to punish his ancient people; therefore *he* is said to have "*trodden them in his anger*," &c. As it is not the axe which cuts off the head, but the man who wields it, (chap. x. 15.) The words, "*And of the people there was no man with me*," refer to the Jews themselves; and imply, as was indeed the case, that the great body of the people would be against the Lord when he came to execute the threatened vengeance; he would have none on his side. And so we have reason to fear it will be when

[1] See Wars of the Jews, L. iv. c. 3.

he shall come a second time to destroy the world. See Remarks.

"*Their blood hath sprinkled my garments,*" &c. Terrific as is the imagery here employed, it scarcely comes up to, certainly does not excede, the reality, supposing the judgments inflicted upon the Jewish nation by the Romans to be the subject of it. The immense carnage made of them when Jerusalem was taken, has been already noticed,—(note chap. v. 14.) But, as there remarked, the effusion of Jewish blood did not stop here. More than half a million are said to have died by the sword in a subsequent war under the Emperor Hadrian. This war was excited by the famous impostor Bar-cochab; and such was the destruction of lives which took place, that the Jewish Rabbins affirm in their hyperbolical manner, that stones of four pounds weight were carried into the sea, a distance of forty miles, by the streams of blood. Is then the imagery of the prophet too strong?

"*The year of my redeemed is come.*" The redemption of the disciples of Christ was come when Jerusalem was destroyed, because an end was then put to the power of their bitterest persecuters; and the Church was redeemed from the oppression of those who vainly imagined that they alone composed it. True it is that it suffered much subsequently from heathen persecutions, but the abolition of the Jewish polity paved the way for the conversion of the Gentiles, and the cessation of persecution. In what other sense than this can the words of Christ to his apostles be understood, Luke xxi. 28, where, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, he says: "When these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads;

for your *redemption* draweth nigh?" See chap. lxi. 2.

The remaining verses are precisely parallel with chap. lix. 16,—to the notes upon which the reader is referred.

REMARKS.

In the interpretation of the preceding prophecy I have given what appears to me to be its primary application. But the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem is spoken of in the gospels in such close connection with his second coming in glorious majesty to put all enemies under his feet, and those two events are, in a manner, so identified with each other, that the former must be considered as a sort of type of the latter. The Christian, therefore, in reading this section will naturally be led to think of that far more important and terrible manifestation of the Son of God which the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles teach us to expect. He will carry his mind forward to that solemn period when, "The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel."—(2 Thess. i.) When he shall appear, "Whose eyes are as a flame of fire; who hath on his head many crowns; and upon his vesture and his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS; and who treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."—(Rev. xix. 11—16.) These and many passages of like import, seem to indicate, that at the second coming of Christ the world will not be in that universally Christianized state which some suppose.

Rather may we not infer that, if the judgments which came upon Jerusalem were an earnest of that judgment which shall be executed upon the nominal Christian church, it will come upon it in the same unexpected manner as those judgments did upon the Jews? There is an analogy in all the proceedings of God. And "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be." Protestant writers are too apt to confine these sort of reflections to the Church of Rome, as if they only would be involved in the threatened judgments. But let it be remembered that *names merely* are of little importance. The wrath of God will be revealed from heaven against *all ungodliness* and *unrighteousness*—and tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath, are denounced against every man that *doeth evil*—in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."—Rom. ii. 5—11. Do we believe these things? Let us then be on our guard. "Behold, I come as a thief:" says our gracious Redeemer, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments *pure*." (Rev. xvi. 15.) How do we know but these events may be near at hand? To fix the precise period for their taking place, is presumption. To treat the subject with indifference and contempt, is infidelity.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LXIII.

(1) Heb. "*Stained, or dyed in the garments.*" The original meaning of חמוץ is *fermented.* But that which is *fermented,* is corrupted, and spoilt, for a time. Hence the above signification of the word when applied to a garment.

(2) נצחם. Literally "*their strength,*" that is, their blood, because the blood constitutes the natural life, and is the source of strength. Gen. ix. 4.

(3) See Critical Note on verse 16, chap. lix.

(4) For ואשכרם, "and I made them drunken," twenty-seven MSS. (three ancient) have ואשברם "and I crushed them: and so Syriac and Chaldee." Bishop Lowth.

SECT. 59. CHAP. LXIII. 7—19. CHAP. LXIV.

THE contents of this section cannot be given better than in the words of Bp. Lowth; "The remaining part of this chapter, and the whole chapter following, contains a penitential confession and supplication of the Israelites in their present state of dispersion, in which they have so long marvellously subsisted, and still continue to subsist, as a people. They begin with acknowledging God's great mercies and favours to their nation; and the ungrateful returns made to them on their part; that by their disobedience they had forfeited the protection of God, and had caused him to become their adversary. And now the prophet represents them, induced by the memory of the great things that God had done for them, as addressing their humble supplication for the renewal of his mercies; they beseech him to regard them in consideration of his former loving kindness; they acknowledge him for their Father and Creator: they confess their wickedness and hardness of heart; they intreat his forgiveness; and deplore their present miserable condition under which they have so long suffered. It seems designed as a formulary of humiliation for the Israelites, in order to their conversion."

This view, which is that generally taken, of the following beautiful and pathetic portion of Scripture, greatly confirms the interpretation that has been given of the six preceding verses. For supposing them to be connected with each other, which is certainly the most natural supposition, nothing can be more appropriate than the introduction of such *a confession and supplication* as Bp. Lowth describes this to be, in this place.—On the other hand, if we interpret those six verses exclusively of the destruction of antichrist, and the general judgment,—before which it is generally admitted the conversion of the Jews will take place—with what propriety can these words be put into their mouths? Besides which, the next chapter, in answer to this expostulation, declares why the Gentiles would be received, and the Jews rejected.

ISAIAH, Sect. 59. Chap. LXIII. 7—11.

7. I will celebrate the mercies of Jehovah, the praises of Jehovah will I sing: (1)
   According to all that Jehovah hath bestowed upon us,
   And according to his great goodness to the house of Israel.
   Who hath bestowed good upon them, according to his compassion, and his great mercies.
8. For he said;
   " Surely these are my people, children that will not deceive; "
   And he was to them a Saviour.
9. In all their affliction, he was afflicted; (2)
   And the angel of his presence saved them.
   In his love, and in his pity he redeemed them;
   Yea, he lifted up, and carried them, all the days of old.
10. But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit;
    And he was changed into their enemy; himself fought against them.
11. Then his people (3) remembered the days of old, of Moses;
    How he brought them up from the sea, with the shepherd of his flock;

How he put within him, his holy Spirit.

12. Causing his glorious arm, to accompany the right hand of Moses; (4)
Dividing the waters before them, to make unto himself, an everlasting name:

13. Making them to walk in the depths as a horse upon the plain; they stumbled not:

14. As a beast descendeth into a valley, a wind from Jehovah hath formed, (5)
So didst thou lead thy people, to make unto thyself a glorious name.

15. Look down from heaven and behold, from the abode of thy holiness and glory.
Where is thy zeal, and thy might;
Thy pity, (6) and thy compassion? are they shut against me?

16. For thou art our Father,
Although Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us;
Thou Jehovah art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from eternity.

17. Why madest thou us, O Jehovah, to wander from thy ways?
Why hast thou hardened our heart that we should not fear thee?
Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

18. They have possessed thy holy mountain (7) but a little time,
Even our enemies who have trod down thy sanctuary:

19. We have been thine of old, thou didst never rule
over them;
They have not been called by thy name.

CHAP. LXIV.—1. Oh that thou wouldst rend the
heavens, and descend,
To make known thy name unto thine enemies!
The mountains would dissolve at thy presence,
2. As fire melteth the wax:
As fire causeth the waters to boil,
At thy presence would the nations tremble. (1)
3. When thou didst thy terrible acts, we could not
endure; (2)
Thou didst descend, the mountains dissolved at
thy presence:
4. But never have our ears heard, nor hath eye seen,
O God, beside thee, what thou wilt do for him
that trusteth in thee. (3)
5. Thou preventest with rejoicing, every one that
doeth righteousness,
They who remember thee in thy ways.
Behold thou art angry; and truly we have sinned:
Thy mercy is everlasting, (4) and we shall be
saved.
6. Yea, we are all like one unclean, and all our
righteous deeds are as filthy rags; (5)
And we all wither as a leaf, and our iniquities,
like a wind, carry us away.
7. And none calleth upon thy name, or waketh up
to strengthen himself in thee;
For thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast
given us up to the power of our iniquities.

[illegible] art our Father:
[illegible] our former:
[illegible] thy hands.
[illegible] O Jehovah, neither
[illegible] forever.
[illegible] we beseech thee, we are
[illegible]
[illegible] a wilderness;
[illegible] is desolate.
[illegible] where our fathers
[illegible]
[illegible] all those things in
[illegible] waste.
[illegible] withhold thy
[illegible]
[illegible] grievously afflict us?

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LXIII. 7, 8.

V. 7. This verse is a general introduction to the following ode. The prophet, as the representative of the Jewish nation, now supposed to be almost destroyed and scattered over the face of the earth, proposes to commemorate the past mercies of Jehovah. Thus we are taught that in the deepest distress, and when suffering the severest chastisements from God, we should remember his goodness in times past; and instead of murmuring because of our present troubles, praise him for mercies already received.

V. 8. "*These are my people,*" &c. When Jehovah brought the Israelites out of Egypt, he signified his peculiar love to them, by calling them *his people*, and his *children*, (Exod. iii. and iv.) and having bestowed the highest privileges upon them, he had reason to expect that they would be faithful to him, and not forsake his worship for that of other gods. He said, therefore, "*Surely they are children that will not deceive*, or, *prove false.*" This, however, must not be understood in a strictly literal sense, as if God was deceived in the Jews. He knew that they would prove rebellious, and turn away from him. (Deut. xxxii.) When, therefore, the prophet puts these words into the mouth of Jehovah, it is supposing him to speak as a man would do, who having loaded another with benefits, would naturally

expect that he should remember them with gratitude, and love his benefactor.

9. "*In all their affliction,*" &c. Alluding no doubt to Exod. iii. 7. "And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry; "for I *know* their sorrows." And thus also St. Paul; "We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities," &c. (Heb. iv. 15.) Let us remember this declaration is of general application. And how encouraging is the thought which it suggests? Jehovah takes part in the afflictions of his people. Not that he actually suffers with them; but he takes notice of their sufferings, and when proper will remove them.

"*The angel of his presence.*" That this does not mean a *created being*, distinct and separate from Jehovah, is, I think, evident, not only from the manner in which the expression is used here, but also from several other places in scripture where a similar phrase is employed. I refer especially to, Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. and to Exod. iii. 2, 4. xxxiii. 14. In the first of these, Jacob calls the God before whom his fathers walked, "*the angel that redeemed him from all evil.*" In the second, the *angel* who appeared to Moses in the bush, is styled *Jehovah*, and speaks as Jehovah. In the third, we find God promising to Moses in answer to his intercession on behalf of the Israelites, that *his presence* should go with them. The *angel of his presence* then signifies Jehovah himself, *manifestly* present with his people. And have we not sufficient ground for concluding that this was no other than the second person of the Trinity, who is called by Malachi, "the *Messenger*, or *Angel* of the Covenant;" [1] and who is said by St. Paul to be, "the

[1] Mal. iii. 1.

image of the invisible God ;[1] and "the brightness of the Father's glory ?"[2] I know of no other import that can be assigned to the phrase, *the angel of his presence*, than the above; for it implies not merely one who stands in the presence of Jehovah ; but one who makes manifest, or, as it were, conveys his presence to others. Compare John i. 14.

"*In his love, and in his pity he redeemed them*," &c. It was in his love and his compassion for his peopl that Jehovah *redeemed* them from Egypt, *exalted* them above their enemies, and *carried* them safely through all dangers ; not on account of any superior excellence in themselves ; and so, "It is not because of works of righteousness that we have done," but through the kindness and mercy of our God that *we* are redeemed, if redeemed, from sin and everlasting death.

V. 10. The rebellions and ingratitude of the Israelites are too well known to need insisting upon. But in what sense did they "*grieve his Holy Spirit ?*" Did they resist and oppose the *internal* influence of his Spirit upon their hearts and minds ? or, is the meaning only that they grieved God's Spirit by refusing to obey those *external* calls which he addressed to them by his inspired prophets ? The resolution of this question has given rise to endless controversies. To enter upon the discussion of it would be entirely out of place here. However, surely every one must admit that the grieving of the Spirit referred to, *may* mean nothing more than the resisting him speaking by Moses, Joshua, Samuel, &c. It is clear that in this sense it is said, "God's Spirit strove with man" in the days of Noah. (Compare Gen. vi. 3. and 1 Pet. iii. 18—20.) Good would it be for the church if, in speaking or writing upon such

[1] Col. i. 15. [2] Heb. i. 3.

subjects, all parties would remember that they are but men, and incapable of comprehending in their finite minds the whole counsel of God; and that any thing like asperity, pride, or violence, must "grieve that Spirit whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption." See Remarks on chapter v.

V. 11—14. "*Then his people remembered the days of old,*" &c.; i. e. the judgments inflicted upon the Israelites in their journeying through the wilderness, and after their arrival in the promised land, had the effect of bringing them to a temporary repentance, and made them remember what great things Jehovah had done for them in former times by the hand of Moses, when he divided the Red Sea and the river Jordan to make a way for them to pass over. So Psalm lxxviii. 34, 35. "When he slew them, they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock," &c.

That soul, however, must be in a poor condition indeed which remembers God only when his judgments are poured forth.

"*To make unto thyself a glorious name.*" See Joshua ii. 10.

V. 15. "*Where is thy zeal, and thy might?*" That is, that zeal, and that mighty power which thou hast shewn in former times on behalf of thy people? The expostulation of the Jewish nation is founded on the idea that we expect, and are justly entitled to, more sympathy and help in times of affliction from those to whose kindness we are already indebted, than we are from those who have never conferred any benefit upon us.

V. 16. "*Although Abraham knoweth us not,*" &c. The sense is; 'Although Abraham and Jacob being dead, feel no regard for us, neither bring us any relief, yet thy love, and power, and providential care are ever-

lasting; and since thou didst shew thyself to be our Father and Redeemer in former times, so now we beseech thee as thy children, put forth thy power and help us.' Compare chap. i. 2.

V. 17. The expressions in this verse would seem to imply that God had *caused* these supplicant Jews *to wander from his ways;* and that *he had,* by a positive act of his power, *hardened their hearts.* But can this be? Certainly not. In imputing their wanderings and hardness of heart to Jehovah, they do not, they cannot mean, that he had actually *caused* them to sin; but the ground of their complaint is that he had *permitted* them to do so: and this expostulation therefore implies a full conviction on their part, of their disposition to wander, and of the hardness of their hearts; because it intimates that the *allowing* them to wander was equivalent to causing them do to so; and the *not* softening their hearts was the same as hardening them. See chap. vi.

V. 18, 19. "*They,*" meaning the Gentiles. Here another ground of expostulation is introduced. The antient people of God urge as a reason why he should again shew favour to them, that the Gentiles had but recently possessed his *holy mountain;* or in other words, I conceive, that they had only now begun to worship him, having before been his enemies; whereas they, the Jews, had been his people of old time, and had known him from the first. The sixty-fifth chapter, which is an answer to this complaint, plainly foretells the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews; therefore the expression, "they have possessed thy holy mountain" must evidently be understood, not literally of the Chaldeans possessing Mount Zion, but figuratively of the Gentiles' being made possessors of the privileges and worship of the true Church. See chap. ii. 1. notes.

[illegible] LXIV. 1—4.

V. 1, 2. There is a reference in these verses to the descent of Jehovah upon Mount Sinai at the giving of the law. The purport of the prayer is, that Jehovah would manifest himself to the enemies of his people [illegible] as he had formerly done on that occasion, when [illegible] fire," and so terrible was [illegible] Moses said: I exceedingly [illegible] xii. 21. Should Jehovah thus [illegible] his mighty power, *to his* [illegible] would be utterly dissolve before him, as wax [illegible] See additional Note.

[illegible] These signify symbolically the [illegible] who are so represented because [illegible] and impiety.

V. 3. "When [illegible] *terrible acts*," &c. The [illegible] endure the terrors which accompanied the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai by [illegible] and they therefore besought Moses that he would speak to them, and not God. (Exod. xx. 18, 19.) The manner of the allusion here made to this circumstance, may be thus explained. 'If we, thy [illegible] people, who on that last expressed all good [illegible] could not endure the manifestation of thy power; how much less shall thy enemies be able to endure it!'

V. 4. "*But* [illegible] *ears heard*," &c. Many [illegible] are the interpretations that have been given of this well-known passage. Taken by itself, as quoted by St. Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 9, the meaning is obvious enough. The difficulty is to make out the connection between this verse and the preceding. It appears to me, however, that it may be shewn something in this

manner:—The supplicant Jews who are supposed to utter this prayer had referred to the terrible manifestations of Jehovah's majesty which accompanied the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai. These they had witnessed, and could not endure. 'But,' say they, 'we have *not* heard with our ears, nor have our eyes seen, what thou wilt do for those who wait for the fulfilment of thy promises when the long looked-for Messiah shall come.' The things therefore which their *ears had not heard*, &c. are the wonderful blessings of the Gospel, which far exceed what believers of old hoped for, or anything that man could ever have imagined or anticipated. This is the interpretation of the passage given by St. Paul, as cited above, and is that alone which suits the context. To quote these words, therefore, to prove our ignorance of the nature of a future state, as is often done, is clearly a misapplication of them. For they do not refer to the condition of the righteous hereafter, as has been already shewn; and supposing that they did, St. Paul declares that these things, whatever they may be, are not hidden from those who believe, for, "God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit." Compare Matt. xi. 25.

V. 5. "*Thou preventest with rejoicing*," &c. This implies that God meets, as it were, half way, those who love him and keep his commandments, and imparts to their souls a holy joy. And thus also our Lord says to his Apostles; "If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) See also, Luke xv. 20. How beautiful and encouraging an illustration does the latter passage afford of the words of the prophet!

"*In thy ways*," i. e. walking in thy ways; or, living according to thy will.

"*Behold thou art angry,*" &c. The sacred choir here acknowledge that Jehovah was justly wrath with them, on account of their sins. Yet they express a confident hope of salvation because of the unchangeableness of his mercy. And what better words can a Christian employ to express the feelings of his heart than these? May we not all adopt the language of the Psalmist, and say; "Enter not into judgment with thy servants, O Lord, for in thy sight verily shall no man living be justified?" See Critical Note.

V. 6. These words are only an enlargement upon the confession made in the preceding verse. The pious penitents acknowledge, in the name of their nation, that, like a leprous person, they were *unclean*, and unfit consequently to appear amongst the number of his chosen people. As a leper, on account of his uncleanness was excluded from the congregation of Israel, and from the worship of the Temple. They acknowledge further, that, being unclean themselves, their works also, even the best of them, are defiled with a mixture of sin, and as incapable of hiding the deformity of their souls and of rendering them fit to appear in the presence of God, as *filthy rags* are of covering and adorning the body. Can language express more strongly the *insufficiency* of our works to justify us in the sight of the most high God? For let it be observed that the speakers in this instance are supposed to be the pious, not the reprobate part of the nation; so that the acknowledgement they make of their guilt and pollution may be considered as of general application.

"*Wither as a leaf,*" &c. Here a new metaphor is introduced. As the leaves of a tree parched from want of moisture, wither, fall off, and are carried about by the wind; so the Jewish people, being deprived of the protection of Jehovah and the consolations of his spirit,

complain of having lost all their strength and glory, being scattered, and driven about from country to country, like withered leaves, the derision of their enemies.

V. 7. "*And none calleth upon thy name,*" &c. This is noticed as an additional aggravation of their sin.—Although reduced to a state of the greatest distress and misery, they none of them think of turning to the only quarter from which they can obtain help, or of awaking from their stupefaction and folly to seek strength from Jehovah. How exactly do these words suit the condition of the Jews from the destruction of their city by the Romans to the present day! Blinded by prejudice, and infatuated with the vain expectation of a conquering Messiah, they still refuse to turn to him who alone can save them.

V. 8, 9. In these verses the supplicants again express their confidence in the mercy of Jehovah. They plead their relationship to him as his children, and as being in a peculiar manner the *work of his hands.* God indeed is the Creator of all men; but the Jews might, in an especial sense, call him *their* Father and Creator, because of those peculiar favours he had shewn to them above every other nation upon earth.'—(See chap. i. 2. notes.) Could he then now cast them off? Could he neglect the work of his own hands?

V. 10, 12. It must be admitted that these words might with propriety have been used by the Jews captive in Babylon, with reference to the state of Judæa at that period. But the answer of Jehovah in the following chapter, in which there is not the slightest intimation that the temple would be rebuilt, and the Jews restored to their own land, shews, I think, that this whole passage is to be understood of the condition of Jerusalem and Judæa, after the last war with the

[illegible] destruction of the city and temple by [illegible]

[illegible] Thou still disregard our [illegible] of our calamities?"

REMARKS.

[illegible] have an imaginary sacred elegy, [illegible] of the feelings of the pious [illegible] their temple burnt, their city razed [illegible] nation dispersed over the [illegible]. What room is the instruction we may [illegible] inspired composition? For [illegible] by his Spirit cause it to be [illegible] with pious sentiments, calcu- [illegible] a holy fervour, zeal for the glory of God, [illegible] and remuneration, every attentive [illegible] perceive. But viewed *as a whole*, [illegible] designed to impress upon the [illegible] to which those must [illegible] are forsaken by God, and [illegible] to the dominion of their sins. This [illegible] that horrible state of impiety at [illegible] at length arrived. They were forsaken [illegible]. He withdrew altogether his Holy Spirit from [illegible]. Their evil passions being thus permitted to [illegible] over them, the consequence [illegible] their minds became darkened, and they were [illegible] religion entirely ceased from [illegible] have lost all sense of right [illegible] that at last they were more like wild [illegible] than moral beings. Such are the dreadful [illegible] which result from a nation's being given [illegible] to the power of the evil propensities of our

nature. And we should remember that similar results follow with respect to individuals. The man who by wilful sins against the light of revelation and of conscience, loses all reverence for the Deity, is at length given up by him to the dominion of his evil passions, which reign in his breast, and finally bring upon him everlasting wrath. How earnestly then should we pray, "Lord, forsake us not utterly."

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LXIII. 7—19.

(1) "*Will I sing.*" These words are not in the original, but they seem necessary to complete the sense.

(2) "*In all their affliction,*" &c. Bishop Lowth, after the Sept. gives quite a different turn to the passage. He would read לֹא, *not*, instead of לוֹ, to him, and צַר he would understand as צִיר.—His translation is:

> "And he became their Saviour in all their distress.
> It was not *an envoy*, nor an angel of his presence, that saved them;" &c.

But besides that this rendering of צַר is forced and unnatural, the sentiment thus expressed is, in my opinion, far less beautiful than that of the authorised version; which is confirmed also by the words of Jacob already referred to, Gen. xlviii. 16.

(3) Some MSS. read עַבְדּוֹ, *his servant*, instead of עַמּוֹ, *his people*. In this case, יִזְכֹּר will refer to Jehovah. Bp. Lowth adopts the alteration, and renders the passage—

> "And he remembered the days of old, Moses his servant."

(4) Literally; "*Causing his glorious arm to walk on the right hand of Moses.*"

(5) "*The wind of Jehovah hath formed.*" The sense of the original in this place is very doubtful. There is, however, clearly a reference to the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, noticed in verse 12. The word there used to express the act of dividing the waters, is בּוֹקַע. Now I cannot help thinking that בִּקְעָה alludes to that division; so that the full meaning of the words might be thus expressed; "As a beast descendeth into a valley for shade and refreshment, so did thy people descend into that valley which thou hadst formed in the bed of the sea by causing a mighty wind to blow upon it, and divide its waters."

תְּנִיחֶנּוּ, signifies, *to make to rest*, or *to cause to sink down*, and may very properly be applied to the formation of a valley.

(6) "*Pity.*" Heb. "*the moving of thy bowels.*"

(7) For עם, *people*, we ought I think to read הר, *mountain*. (See Chap. lvii. 13.) This makes a clear sense, which the received reading does not. For how could the Jews be said to have possessed the sacred mountain but a *little time?* Sept. "*τον ορους τον αγιον σου.*"

CHAP. LXIV.

(1) I have taken the liberty of placing these lines in the order in which they would naturally stand in English; since this transposition does not effect their general meaning, and yet makes it plain, which would otherwise be involved and obscure. The order of the original is preserved in the authorized version.

"*As fire melteth the wax.*" So I translate the words אש כקדח חמסים. The latter word is derived from מסס, *to dissolve*, and may mean therefore any substance that easily melts. Sept. "*Ως πυρος απο προσωπου πυρος τηκεται.*"

(2) נקוה means properly, *we did not wait, or expect*. But here it seems to have the signification I have given it. Compare Exod. xx. 18.

(3) The text in this place is manifestly corrupted, and it is hard to say how it ought to be amended, the Sept. being so unlike the original that it affords no help. The לא after שמעו appears to be redundant; and instead of ראזינו, which cannot well be construed to make sense, we ought perhaps to read אזנינו, *our ears*; or באזנינו, *with our ears*. The latter part of the verse is still more difficult than the former. The Hebrew literally rendered is; "*eye hath not seen a God beside thee, who doeth for him that waiteth for him.*" Or, "*O God, beside thee,*" &c. Bp. Lowth supplies, "*such things.*" If אלהים be rendered in the vocative, we must read the verb in the second person, and לך, instead of לו. There is this, however, to be observed, that in whatever way the passage be read, the general meaning will be the same.

(4) For בחם, which makes no good sense, may we not read רחם? This alteration in two letters removes all difficulties, without making such an entire change in the text, as is proposed by Bp. Lowth. He justly remarks that עולם cannot mean, *continuance*, as it is rendered in our Bibles.

(5) "*Filthy rags.*" The Hebrew is, "*a garment of cast off things*, or, *patches*. The precise meaning of עדים is not known.

(6) "*Notwithstanding.*" על אלה, *For these things*; or, *under such circumstances*.

SECT. 60. CHAP. LXV.

In reply to the expostulation of his ancient people, contained in the preceding section, Jehovah declares, that he had now made himself known to the Gentiles, having cast off the Jews on account of their sins, which are enumerated, and retribution threatened, verse 1—7; to comfort the pious, however, the promise of the preservation of a chosen remnant of the nation is added, verse 8—10; the apostate Jews are then again addressed, and their destruction, as a nation, foretold, verse 11—15; the remainder of the chapter contains many encouraging promises relating to the happy and glorious condition of the people of God when his kingdom shall be fully come.

ISAIAH, Sect. 60. Chap. LXV. 1—6.

1. I am sought by those who asked not for me,
   I am found by those who sought me not:
   I have said, Behold me, behold me,
   Unto a nation that called not upon my name.
2. I have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious people;
   That walk in a way which is not good, according to their own imaginations.
3. A people that provoke mine indignation to my face continually,
   Sacrificing in gardens, and burning incense upon the tiles;
4. Who dwell among the tombs, and pass the night in sepulchres; (1)
   Who eat the flesh of swine, and have morsels of abominable things in their vessels;
5. Who say, Stand off; (2) come not near me; for I am holier than thou.
   These are as a smoke in my nose of a fire that burneth all the day.
6. Behold, it is written before me, I will not spare,

But I will surely repay, yea, I will repay into their bosom.

7. Their own iniquities, and the iniquities of their fathers together, saith Jehovah:
Who have burned incense upon the mountains,
And dishonoured me upon the hills;
Surely I will measure the recompense [4] of their former work into their bosom.

8. Thus saith Jehovah.
As wine is found in a single cluster of grapes,
And they say, Destroy it [5] not, for a blessing is in it;
So will I do for the sake of my servants; I will not destroy the whole:

9. And I will bring forth from Jacob a seed, and from Judah an inheritor of my mountain;
And my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

10. And Sharon shall be as a fold for the flock,
And the valley of Achor for the cattle to lie down in,
For my people who have sought me.

11. But ye are they who have forsaken Jehovah, and have forgotten my holy mountain;
Who prepare a table for Gad, and fill libations for Meni;

12. Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter.
Because I called, and ye answered not;
I have spoken, and ye would not hearken;

But have done that which is evil in mine eyes,
And have chosen that in which I have no pleasure;

13. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah;
Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry;
Behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty;

14. Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be confounded;
Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart,
But ye shall cry out for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit;

15. And ye shall leave your name for a curse among my chosen;
And the Lord Jehovah shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.

16. He that pronounceth a blessing (6) on the earth, shall bless by the God of truth;
And he that sweareth on the earth, shall swear by the God of truth;
For the former troubles are forgotten, and they are hid from mine eyes.

17. For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth,
And the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind:

18. For ye shall surely rejoice, and be glad for ever in those which I create;
For behold I make Jerusalem, gladness, and her people, joy;

19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in my people:
And the voice of weeping, and the voice of lamentation shall no longer be heard in her.
20 From thenceforth there shall no more be an infant born but for a day,
Or an old man that shall not complete his days:
For the youth is an hundred years old, shall be esteemed a youth:
But the sinner though he die an hundred years old shall be accursed.
21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them;
And they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
22 They shall not build, and another inhabit;
They shall not plant, and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, shall be the days of my people:
And my chosen shall consume the work of their hands.
23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth children to trouble:
For they are the seed blessed by Jehovah, and their offspring with them.
24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer;
And while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed in one
place,
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
But for the serpent, dust shall be his meat.
They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all my
holy mountain,
Saith Jehovah.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LXV. 1. 2.

V. 1. 2. "*I was sought by those,*" &c. St. Paul has sufficiently explained Rom. x. 20 the meaning of these words. From him we learn, that those who are here represented as seeking Jehovah and *finding* him, though they had before paid no regard to him, are the Gentiles. And this interpretation is indeed so natural, that it needs not any arguments to confirm it. Who but Jehovah *found* by those who *had not sought* him, when the Jews having been rejected because of their unbelief, multitudes from among the Gentiles were called from dumb idols to serve him the living God? 1 Thess. i. 9. This then is the reply which God makes to the expostulation of his ancient people: he tells them that he had cast them off on account of their sins, and was about to establish a church among the Gentiles.

"*I said, Behold me, unto a nation that called not upon my name.*" That is, the Jews. Often had Jehovah said to them, Behold me, behold me: often had he *stretched out his hand* to them in the way of friendship, or, in other words, declared himself ready still to forgive them, and be their God. But they would not *call upon his name*: they continued *rebellious* and disobedient, and obstinately determined to follow their own corrupt inclinations in opposition to his will. The reader need not be told how true this was of the nation at large.

Some few exceptions, indeed, there were at all times, but the general character of the Jewish people was indisputably of the above description.

V. 3—5. It does not appear that the Jews were guilty of the sins which are here enumerated in our Lord's time, or indeed at any period subsequent to the Babylonian captivity. However, no just argument can be drawn from hence against the preceding application of the prophecy: for this, and all the other prophecies, were intended for the benefit of those who lived at the time they were delivered, as well as for the instruction of the church in all ages; therefore the sins to which the cotemporaries of the prophets were most addicted are expressly mentioned; since, otherwise, they might never have thought of making a practical application of their warnings and denunciations to themselves.

"*Sacrificing in gardens.*" It is not known with certainty what particular act of idolatry is here intended. Most commentators are of opinion that the *gardens* spoken of were the same as the *groves* in which the Gentiles were accustomed to perform their abominable idolatries, and the use of which, therefore, was expressly forbidden the Israelites. See chap. i. 29. Deut. vii. 5, 16—25.

"*Upon the tiles.*" That is, upon the roofs of the houses, which were formed of tiles, and upon which the idolatrous Jews were accustomed to burn incense to Baal, and the other heathen deities; as we learn from 2 Kings xxiii. 12. Jer. xix. 13.

"*Who dwell among the tombs,*" &c. I cannot find that there are any authentic accounts to be met with among Jewish writers relative to the practice which is here condemned. We know, however, that the pretenders to magic among the Romans used to perform

their incantations by night among the tombs, for the purpose of raising the dead, and consulting them concerning future events.[1] The Jews probably passed the night among the tombs with the same object in view. But this pretended art, which is properly called *necromancy*, had also been expressly forbidden by God. See chap. viii. 19.

"*Which eat the flesh of swine*," &c. Hence it is probable that the Jews in Isaiah's time were in the habit of indulging their appetites in eating and drinking without regard to those distinctions of clean and unclean meats which the law enjoined. The only instance, however, on record, in which the Jews violated the prohibition respecting swine's flesh, is related in 1 Maccab. i. 51, where we are told Antiochus caused the Jews to sacrifice hogs, and eat their flesh; nor did the majority of the people refuse to do so. This however was a compulsory act. The words of the prophet intimate, that with those of whom he speaks, it was habitual and voluntary. But could there be any great sin in eating the flesh of a hog, more than of any other animal? Does not our Lord himself declare, "Not that which goeth into the *mouth* defileth a man, but those things which proceed out of the *heart*?" (Matt. xv.) To attempt to enter fully into this subject here is out of the question: that God had good and sufficient reasons for commanding the Israelites to abstain from certain kinds of food, no one can doubt who believes Moses to have been an inspired lawgiver: to disregard these prohibitions, therefore, was to disregard the will of God, and virtually to deny his right to impose laws upon his creatures.[2] And

[1] See an account of the incantations and ceremonies employed on such occasions, Hor. Sat. Lib. i. viii.

[2] The two chief reasons, probably, why the prohibitions referred to

hence we may infer, that it is sinful to neglect any positive precept of the *new covenant*, although not in *itself* essentially and morally good; and although *we* may not be able to see the end for which it was given, and the advantages resulting from its observance. This remark applies to baptism and the eucharist, which are clearly and positively enjoined by Christ himself, and, therefore, whether we perceive the use of them or not, cannot be neglected without sin.[1]

"*Who say, Stand off,*" &c. It is scarcely credible, that those who committed such gross violations of the law as the foregoing should have pretended to greater holiness than others, and bid the multitude keep off, as unworthy to approach them. We must therefore suppose, either that, as open transgressors were alluded to in the preceding verses, here proud, self-righteous hypocrites are intended; or else, if the same persons are spoken of throughout, that the sins mentioned are to be taken in a figurative rather than in a literal sense. That is to say, that they must be understood as signifying, that these very men, who pretended to extraordinary holiness and piety, and separated themselves from the bulk of mankind, were, like the Pharisees, to whom there may be a particular allusion, guilty in the sight of God of as great crimes as the most open and daring transgressors. Let us not,

were given, were, First, To preserve the Israelites the more easily as a distinct people; and, Secondly, To promote their health and purity; the flesh of the animals forbidden being considered unwholesome and impure. The reader who wishes to see this subject treated of at large, may consult the 'Reasons of the Law of Moses,' by Maimonides, which has recently been translated into English by Dr. Townley. It contains some useful information amongst a good deal of trifling.

[1] Not that the reasons of the Christian sacraments are not clear and obvious. Yet, supposing it were otherwise, as some seem to think, still they would be binding.

however, abuse and pervert this passage as some do. *Hypocrites* are condemned for pretending to extraordinary sanctity, and for keeping aloof from the multitude: and hence some argue that there is no occasion for a Christian to separate himself from the world, and seem to make a *boast* of 'not being better than their neighbours.' But who does not see that the thing here condemned is not separation from the world, but an *hypocritical pretension* to superior attainments in religion?

"*These are as a smoke in my nose,*" &c. An expressive metaphor this to shew the abhorrence in which God holds all hypocrites and their services. They are to him like a thick smoke coming full in the face, and which is at once offensive and suffocating. Their *prayers*, instead of resembling sweet incense, resemble rather a fœtid smoke.

V. 6. "*Is written before me.*" Their sin, that is, is recorded as in a book, and shall not be forgotten, although punishment be deferred, and they may think for this reason that they shall altogether escape.

V. 7. "*Who have burned incense upon the mountains,*" &c. See 2 Chron. xxxiv. 25. Jer. vii. 9.

"*I will measure the recompence.*" The sense is, "I will inflict upon them that degree of punishment their sins have deserved. It shall be proportioned to their guilt." The words of our Lord, Matt. xxiii. 35, furnish an instructive comment upon this clause. See Note, chap. xiv. 21.

V. 8—10. It might be supposed, from the denunciation contained in the preceding verse, that Jehovah would utterly reject his people when he visited them for their sins, so that none of them would be spared. Lest the pious Jews should entertain such an idea, an intimation is here given, that a small remnant would

be preserved from destruction. This intimation is conveyed by several different metaphors.

"*As wine is found in a single cluster,*" &c. That is, 'As the owner of a vineyard, when he examines the trees with a view to prune and thin them, by taking out those which are unproductive, if but a single cluster be found upon a vine, will not have it destroyed, for the sake of that cluster; so neither will I utterly destroy my ancient people, for the sake of those few my faithful servants who shall be found amongst them.' This appears to be the true meaning of the passage, which, however, has been variously explained.

"*A blessing is in it.*" Namely, in the vine. Meaning, that the single cluster was an earnest of its bearing more fruit the next year, and consequently of its repaying the owner for any care bestowed upon it. Are we not here reminded of our Lord's words, John xv. 1—6, where, speaking of the church at large, he says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he (my Father) *taketh away;* but every branch that beareth fruit, he *purgeth it,* that it may bring forth *more fruit.*" If then the Lord of the vineyard come and find but the *earnest* of fruit upon you, my reader, you will be spared; but if not—what then? "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" What carefulness—what earnestness—what distrust in ourselves, should these passages awaken! Compare Luke xiii. 6. Heb. vi. 7.

"*A seed—an inheritor of my mountain.*" The interpretation of the whole verse depends upon the meaning given to these two expressions. Vitringa says, that the seed God promises to bring forth from Jacob is, the apostles and evangelists, and other believers from among the Jews, who, by their preaching, should become the fathers of a numerous spiritual offspring,

—such—shall partake of and rejoice in the privileges of those who in former times inhabited the *mount of the house* or Zion, of which they would thus, in a figurative sense become the *inheritors*. But does not this prophecy refer rather to the restoration of the Jews in the latter days? The words seem to imply, not merely that a few of them, like the apostles and evangelists, should be the means of raising up a spiritual seed from among the Gentiles, but that, in due time, the whole nation shall again obtain possession of the Holy Land and dwell at Jerusalem? Such certainly appears at first sight to be the plain and obvious meaning of the prophecy: yet I am inclined to think that Vitringa's interpretation is the true one. The blessings and privileges of the gospel, we have already seen, are often predicted in language suitable to the state of things under the law. (See chap. ii. 1. Isa. 7. In the latter passage there is a promise, very similar to that under consideration, made to the eunuch and the stranger: "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain." When, therefore, it is said, that "the elect remnant of the seed of Jacob, shall inherit the mountain of Jehovah, and that Sharon and Achor shall furnish pasture for their cattle," may not the meaning be, that they shall inherit the blessings promised to Jacob, which were both temporal and eternal, the former being earnests and shadows of the latter? I say, may not this be the meaning; for whether the Jews shall or shall not be reinstated in the possession of the land of Canaan, appears to me to be a question that can be determined only by the event. And surely every body must admit that it is not one of *vital* importance, or one upon which a difference of opinion need, in the smallest degree, affect the union and cordiality of Christians.

"*The heritage of Jacob*" evidently means spiritual blessings in chap. lviii. 14. See also chap. i. 19, note.

V. 11—14. "*But ye are they,*" &c. The same persons are here again addressed as were described in the beginning of the chapter; and the reasons why God had resolved to cast them off, and to create for himself another people, are further enlarged upon. They had forsaken the worship of Jehovah, and had forgotten his temple, which was built upon *mount Zion*, whither he had commanded all the children of Israel to go up and worship. And not only so, but, to increase their sin, they had offered sacrifices and oblations to other gods. They had "*prepared a table for Gad, and filled libations to Meni.*" What deities these were is not known. They were undoubtedly two of the heathen gods whom the Jews worshipped: some say Apollo and Diana. If I may be allowed to hazard a conjecture, I should say Mars and Diana, or the Moon, from the signification of the roots. For *Gad* signifies to "*cut off,*" to "*lay waste by troops,*" and *Meni* to "*number;*" which meanings are more suitable to Mars and Diana than any of the other deities; it being the chief characteristic of the former to *destroy* men in battle, and the peculiar attribute of the latter to *number* the months of the year. Understood thus, the clauses answer well to one another. "Ye have offered sacrifices to Gad (the god of war and slaughter) and ye shall bow down to the *slaughter;* and ye have poured out libations to Meni (number) and I will *number* you to the sword." The latter phrase implies, that an immense destruction of them would take place. That the threatening was fulfilled has already been shewn. See chap. v. 14. lxiii. 1—6.

"*Because I called, and ye answered not,*" &c. "O

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would *I* have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, therefore, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. xxiii. 37. Such was the exclamation of the Son of God with reference to the inhabitants of Jerusalem "in the days of his flesh." And do these words of the prophet need any other comment?

"*Behold my servants shall eat,*" &c. The threatenings and promises contained in these verses are addressed, respectively, to the unbelieving, reprobate Jews, from the coming of Christ until now, and to believers of every description, whether Jews or Gentiles. They are evidently to be understood *figuratively*, not literally. To the faithful are promised all the consolations of the Spirit, and joy and peace in believing. Against the disobedient, on the other hand, destitution of all spiritual comfort, misery and despair are denounced. And thus in truth it came to pass. Whilst the Christians were rejoicing in their God "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," the wicked Jews were suffering inconceivable miseries, both of body and mind; and to this present day they acknowledge themselves that they labour under the displeasure of the Almighty. How did they "howl for vexation of spirit" in Spain, in France, in Turkey, and even in our own country, during the dark periods of the middle centuries!

V. 15. "*And ye shall leave your name,*" &c. The meaning, I imagine, is; 'Your sufferings shall be so great, and your punishment so dreadful, that your name shall be used as a curse. Men shall say of one to whom they wish evil, Let him be as a Jew.' Thus the names of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha were a curse. "Let him be," says Jeremiah, "as the

cities which the Lord overthrew and repented not;" chap. xx. 16.

"*Shall slay thee,*" &c. The singular number being used here shews, that a society of persons united together by a common bond, and called by one name, is the subject of the address. Now what other society can this be than the people of the Jews, considered as the visible church of God? This church he *slew*, when he destroyed Jerusalem and its temple by the Romans, and with these the Jewish nation. For can it with any propriety be said that the Jewish church has had any existence since those events took place?

"*And call his servants by another name.*" Before the establishment of the gospel dispensation the servants of Jehovah were called Jews. Thus St. Paul, (Rom. ii. 28); "He is not a Jew (that is, a true servant of God, and a partaker of the promises made to Judah) who is one outwardly," &c. This prediction, then, was fulfilled when the servants of God were called Christians instead of Jews.

V. 16. "*He that pronounceth a blessing,*" &c. To bless and to swear in the name of "the God of truth," or the true God, is to acknowledge his existence and power; because it implies a belief in his ability to bestow the desired blessings, and to punish the person who violates his oath. Hence these two lines import, simply, that, at the time referred to, all the inhabitants of the earth shall know and worship Jehovah the true God. See chap. xi. notes.

"*For the former troubles are forgotten,*" &c. In that "rest which remains for the people of God," there will be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:" (Rev. xxi. 4.) but we are no where led to expect such a state of things until the eternal kingdom of God shall be fully

established. Then, and not till then, will all the troubles of the church be forgotten. Compare Rom. viii. 19, &c.

V. 17. "*Behold, I create new heavens,*" &c. By some commentators this promise is taken exclusively in a figurative sense. These understand the "new heavens and new earth" to signify the Christian dispensation as opposed to the Jewish. This is Vitringa's view, whose exposition is as follows: 'The creation of new heavens and a new earth is here to be taken generally, both for the setting up of the new dispensation, and its consummation in the end of time. The prophet sees both at one glance: that God, having punished the rebellious Jews, would institute a new dispensation in the church, the consequence of which would be, the calling and conversion of the Gentiles, and the reconciliation of God with the world; and that he would at length consummate the same dispensation by degrees, the righteous in the mean time having to endure many conflicts; but this consummation being effected, that then the new dispensation would put forth all its power; that all the Gentiles, together with the Jews brought into the faith, would glory in MESSIAH JEHOVAH, and swear by the name of the true God; that there would be but one name, but one religion in the world,' &c. Thus Vitringa's idea seems to have been, that the moral change produced by the power of true religion in mankind, is the thing intended by the creation of new heavens and a new earth; although he admits that the abolition of the literal heavens and of the present earth may be remotely intended. That the change which took place in the world upon the promulgation of the gospel, may be figuratively called the creation of *new heavens*, &c. few perhaps will be disposed to dispute; but the words

of St. Peter (2 Epist. iii.) and various other passages in the New Testament, teach us that we are to look for a more literal fulfilment of the prophecy. See Remarks.

V. 18, 19. "*Jerusalem*" in these verses is no doubt to be taken mystically for the city of God, or the church composed of believers in Christ, who "as living stones are built up for an habitation of God by the Spirit." Nothing can be more certain than that the church has never yet been in the state here described; the promise therefore still remains to be fulfilled, at least in its largest sense; for that the condition of the Christian church, as opposed to that of the Jewish, may be primarily intended, is not improbable. See chap. lx. 15.

V. 20. This is perhaps one of the most difficult passages in Isaiah, and has consequently been variously explained. Those who suppose that the Millennium will take place *previously* to the second coming of Christ, and will consist in nothing more than a very general diffusion of true religion, and that the state of the church during that period is the subject of this chapter, understand this verse as a promise that there shall then be no premature or violent deaths, but every infant shall attain the age of manhood, and every grown up person live to be old, so that an hundred years shall be no uncommon age; or, as some think, that all men shall live to the age of the antediluvians, and consequently he that is an hundred years old shall be esteemed young, having lived only a tenth part of his life. These and similar expositions do not appear to me satisfactory. They suppose that children shall be *born*, and grown up people *die*, at the time alluded to; but how can these things, especially the last-mentioned, take place without causing *weeping* and *lamentation*? Why may not the eternal condition of the righteous

in that *new earth* which is to be created, be the subject of the prophecy? We know that in the Revelation of St. John, the blessedness of which the true servants of God shall hereafter be made partakers, is described by images. They dwell in a *city*, the streets of which are paved with gold; they *drink* of a fountain of pure water; and they *eat* of a tree which yields its fruit every month. (Rev. xxi. xxii.) What then should hinder us from understanding these expressions in Isaiah in a similar manner? In this case they may be thus explained; 'In that new earth which God shall create from the ruins of this, there shall be none of those troubles we meet with here. Parents shall not have to lament the loss of their infant children, nor children the death of their parents; but the inhabitants of that world shall be all immortal, so that a hundred years spent by them shall be but as a short period, like the age of child; and thus they shall live ever youthful, and ever blessed.'

"*But the sinner*, &c. From this clause it is argued that the future condition of the righteous cannot be the subject of the preceding verses, because there will be *no* sinners in the kingdom of God. But these words do not necessarily imply there *will* be any in that new state of which the prophet is speaking. They seem to be merely a general declaration that the sinner, however long he may live, is still accursed; and that therefore, although long life, even for ever and ever, is promised to the righteous, yet their blessedness will not consist simply in the length of their days, but in the enjoyment of God's favor, without which, though a man should live for ever, he must be miserable.

V. 21—23. It must be confessed that, on a first view, it seems scarcely probable that what is here predicted should have reference to the eternal state of the

righteous. But where there are difficulties on both sides of a question, we must determine in favour of that which involves the fewest. Now I would ask, is it not equally as difficult to reconcile what is said in the nineteenth verse with any state of things that *can* take place on the earth *in its present condition*, as it is to make the promises contained in these verses suit the state of glorified saints? It is most true that there will be "no marrying, or giving in marriage," no "building of houses or planting of vineyards," in the world to come; but since the quiet possession of these temporal goods is one thing essential to earthly enjoyment, may not this language be intended merely to imply that "they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead," shall not be subject to any of those evils which at present arise from oppression, robbery, and war, but for ever be secure in the possession of the happiness bestowed upon them? See vol. i. p. 56.

"*For as the days of a tree*, &c. The words of Job, chap. xiv. 7. illustrate the meaning of this clause; "For there is hope of a *tree*, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." Thus the sense of this passage seems to be, that the days of the people of God shall be perennial; they shall continue to exist for ever. Or, otherwise, if the millennial state be intended, that their lives shall be prolonged considerably beyond the ordinary duration of human life at present.

V. 24. "*Before they call*," &c. This intimates that at the period referred to, Jehovah will fully satisfy all the desires of his people. He will, as it were, meet

their desires, and they shall wish for nothing they do not possess. But shall we need prayer at all in a future state? Probably not; at least such as we now make use of. But since prayer is nothing more than the expression of the desires of our souls, and an answer to prayer is the satisfying of those desires, these words may be understood generally as a promise that those to whom it is given shall want nothing.

V. 25. "*The wolf and the lamb,*" &c. Compare chap. xi. 6.

"*But for the serpent, dust shall be his meat.*" The curse which was originally pronounced upon Satan, after he had in the form of a serpent deceived our first parent, was to this effect; "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life." Now it is very certain that all this is to be understood figuratively, or mystically. The animal upon which the curse was pronounced was not a mere serpent, but that fallen spirit who in the New Testament is called Satan. His sentence, that he should *go upon his belly*, &c. intimates, that, although not annihilated, or entirely restrained from doing evil, yet he would be so far under restraint as to be always obliged to act covertly and subtlely; and shews the final result of all his machinations against the Church, which will end in disappointment and misery. As if a man should endeavour to satisfy his hunger by filling his mouth with dust and ashes. But if the food of the serpent has always in this sense been *dust*, why is it here threatened as a new thing? Perhaps, because then the original curse will be executed in all its rigor, whereas hitherto it has only been partially fulfilled. Then the "evil one" will reap that punishment he has justly deserved, and the bitter dust of anguish and disappointment will be his food.

REMARKS.

"THE *new heavens and new earth.*"—The most interesting subject that can engage the attention of a being such as man, who, not contented with what he has, is always looking forwards to something he has not, is the future condition of the human race. When we consider what a mere moment the longest existence upon earth is in comparison with that eternal duration for which we profess to believe we are destined, all temporal things sink into insignificance, excepting as far as they are connected with our happiness in a future state, and the only really important questions seem to be: What is the nature of that state? What the character of those to whom it will be a state of enjoyment? But with reference to the first of these, most people, true Christians not excepted, are satisfied with very crude and indistinct ideas. They believe that the righteous will be for ever happy in heaven; and with this vague and general notion they are content. And perhaps the reader may be inclined to ask; "Is not this enough? Need we inquire any further? Especially since an inspired apostle himself affirms that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be?" (1 John iii. 2.) Undoubtedly it is folly to attempt to know more upon this, or any other article of faith, than is clearly revealed; but whatever God *has* revealed concerning it, we are certainly bound to endeavour to understand. In fact, may not the very imperfect conceptions and confused ideas which the generality of professed Christians entertain upon this subject, be one reason why they think so little about a future state, and are so careless with reference to their own eternal destiny? They talk of *heaven* and

hell, but with them these are little more than mere names; they neither seek the one, nor shun the other. And why? Because, I imagine, they attach no definite ideas to either. But has God left us thus altogether in the dark as to our future abode, and our condition in it? With regard to the intermediate state of the soul between the death and resurrection of the body, little indeed is revealed. A veil of mystery is thrown over this period of man's existence. Only we are assured that it is preferable to the present one; for it is better for the believer to "depart and be with Christ," than to remain in this world. (Phil. i. 23.) And therefore it is that the Scriptures direct our hopes and anticipations chiefly to the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final consummation of all things. (See 1 Cor. xv. 1 Thess. iv. 13. 2 Thess. i. 6—10. Titus ii. 13. 2 Pet. iii.) These remarks are made with reference to the promise contained in the seventeenth verse of the preceding chapter, "*Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.*" Granting that these words are to be understood primarily in a figurative sense, of the abolition of the Jewish economy, and the establishment of the Christian dispensation in its stead; the declaration of St. Peter, (2 Epis. iii. 13.) plainly shews, that they will have a *literal* fulfilment. "We, says the apostle, according to his promise, look for new heavens[1] and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Now what can be more clear than the meaning of these words? The sacred writer had

[1] By the *heavens* in this place the apostle does not mean the starry heavens, as is evident from verse 5, but simply what we call the sky or atmosphere, for which the Jews had no other name.—"New heavens," therefore signify a new atmosphere. That this will be necessary in order to render the earth a suitable abode for beings who are intended to be perfectly happy, is very obvious.—See J. Made on 2 Pet. iii.

just before stated that the present heavens and earth shall be consumed by fire, as formerly they had been destroyed, that is, *disorganized*, by water. That he speaks of a *literal* destruction, or disorganization in either case, no one surely will dispute; and what reason then have we for supposing that he does *not* speak of a *literal* renovation? If the deluge was not a figure but a reality, neither will the conflagration of the world referred to by St. Peter, be a figure; and if the conflagration and destruction be real and literal, so also will the renovation.

And shall we then inhabit a material earth after the resurrection of the body from the grave; and will our future condition be so like what it is at present? That we shall inhabit a material world, and that our future condition will in many respects be like our present one, much more so than is commonly supposed, is, I conceive, clearly revealed; although indeed as to the precise nature of the body we shall then possess, and other minutiæ, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Thus much, it seems to me, may be fairly deduced from Scripture upon these points:—

1st. That Christ at his second coming will raise all those who have died in the true faith since the beginning of the world, and will endue them with material bodies, but free from the infirmities and evils to which our present bodies are liable, since they will be so framed that they will be immortal, and consequently not subject to pain, sickness or corruption:—and that the bodies of all those believers who are then alive will be changed in like manner. (1 Cor. xv. 51. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

2ndly. That the residence of the righteous thus fitted for the enjoyment of eternal blessedness, will be the earth we now inhabit, which, after having been

purified by fire, will be again restored to its original state of excellence, and rendered a suitable abode for pure, holy, and happy beings. (Acts iii. 21. 2 Pet. iii. 13.)

3rdly. That the Son of God, in human nature, will be present with his people, who will then behold in him all the fulness of the Godhead, and being made like unto him, live and reign with him in unchangeable glory and felicity. (Acts i. 12. 1 Thess. iv. 17. Coloss. iii. 4. 1 John iii. 2. Rev. vii. 17.)

These general truths respecting a future state are in my opinion, clearly revealed. Perhaps it may be objected with reference to our having material bodies, that St. Paul affirms, that our bodies hereafter will not be composed of matter, but of spirit. "It is sown, he says, a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. xv. 41.) Hence some have argued that the glorified bodies of believers will not be material. But this argument is without foundation. For it is evident that in the above passage the apostle speaks of a spiritual body in contradistinction to a natural body. And what then is a natural body? The literal rendering of the original phrase is "*a soul body*," that is, a body quickened by an animal soul. The epithet therefore which in our Bibles is translated *natural* has no reference to the *substance* of the body, but to the principle by which it is animated. So, I imagine, the other expression referred to does not relate to the materials of which the glorified bodies of the righteous will be composed, but to the principle that shall vivify them. So that a *spiritual body* means, not a body made of spirit, which is indeed an incomprehensible thing, but a body QUICKENED by the Spirit. Thus Augustin understood the passage, who says; "Our bodies will be *spiritual*, not because they will

cease to be bodies; but because they will subsist by the quickening of the Spirit." De Civitate Dei. Lib. xiii. chap. 22.

Such then are the expectations of the Christian. To those who have been accustomed to view the subject in a different light; who, building their hopes perhaps rather upon the conjectures of Gentile philosophers than upon the sure testimony of God revealed in his word, expatiate in the regions of infinite space, and imagine our happiness hereafter will consist in ranging the heavens, and flitting from planet to planet;—to these, probably, the above ideas of a future state will seem low and poor. But this is, I think, from "not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God." We are so accustomed to connect sin, pain, and misery, with whatever is earthly and corporeal, that we can scarcely believe but that they are inseparably connected together. Hence the idea of possessing material bodies and dwelling upon earth, seems utterly incompatible with perfect happiness. But is not this connection rather imaginary than real? Was not Adam in paradise perfectly happy? Was he not holy, pure, and immortal? What in fact is the cause of all the uneasiness, trouble, and suffering to which we are now liable? The very constitution of our original nature? No; for in that case God would not have pronounced it *good*. But the cause is sin, and its accompaniments, care, pain, and death. But let us suppose these to be removed. Let us imagine the earth so changed and purified that it shall produce nothing but what is conducive to the comfort and enjoyment of its inhabitants; surrounded by a sky and atmosphere ever still and calm, and free from chilling blast and scorching heat. Let us imagine such a world peopled with none but holy and immortal beings, bearing the image of their

Saviour, and living together in perfect harmony and love. Above all, enjoying the presence of their Lord, and beholding his glory, when not visibly present to them himself, reflected in all his works.[1] Can anything be conceived more glorious and excellent than such a state? And has the reader never had a faint earnest of it in his own soul? Has he never felt his mind filled with an indiscribable sensation of exalted joy, when, apart from the world, and forgetting for a moment all its miserable vanities, sins, and follies, and whatever is low, mean, and sensual, he has lifted up his heart to God, and, enjoying secret communion with him, has seemed to realize somewhat of that "fulness of joy," which is in his presence, and of those eternal pleasures which are at his right hand for ever?" Especially in the stillness of a summer's day, when everything is calculated to sooth and calm the mind, and all nature speaks the goodness, power, and love

[1] St. Augustin has a remarkable passage in his book, "De Civitate Dei," concerning the manner in which God will be seen by the righteous hereafter; it is in substance as follows:—"Wherefore it is possible, and very probable, that we shall so behold the worldly bodies (i. e. material appearances) of the new heavens, and new earth, that we shall see God most evidently (clarissima perspicuitate) every where present, and governing even all corporeal things, through the bodies we shall ourselves carry about with us, and those which we shall behold wherever we turn our eyes: not as now, when, "the invisible things of God being understood by the things which are made, are seen, as through a glass, (or, reflected by a mirror) in a riddle, and in part," and when inward faith, by which we believe, avails more, than the appearance of those corporeal things which we discern with the eyes of the body. But as, immediately that we look upon living men, we do not simply *believe* that they live, but *see* that they do so, although we cannot see their life without their bodies, which yet we know undoubtedly to be in them, seeing it by means of their bodies; so wheresover we shall carry those spiritual eyes of our (glorified) bodies, we shall behold the incorporeal God by material objects, ruling all things."—Liber xxii. cap. 29.

of the Creator? Such moments are indeed precious. But they are rare and of short duration. We return to the world, to our duties and cares, and they vanish. Yet they leave an impression upon the mind, which is not easily effaced. They are an earnest of eternal blessedness. Here then is something definite to look forward to. Here is a hope which *must* have an influence upon all our words and actions. A hope which he that hath "will purify himself, even as his Lord is pure." (1 John iii. 3.) Philosophers talk of the immortality of the soul and of a future state; but with them these expressions are vague and indefinite; they mean they know not what. Not so the expectations of the Christian. "He *knows* that his Redeemer liveth, and that he will stand in the latter days upon the earth; and that in his flesh he will see God." If then, we really believe in, and look for, these things, let us "be diligent that we may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." Let us live, "as strangers and pilgrims upon earth;" let us, "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LXV.

יְמִימִים ... divine gratification. Bp. Lowth renders

... The Hebrew, literally rendered, is; "*Approach*

... the Sept. τοις ἀναξίοις αὐτων, κ. τ. λ.

מַכְלֵיהֶם ... is frequently used in the sense of wages or

... See Isaiah xlvi. 11.

... antecedent to the "it," is אֶשְׁכֹּל, and this may

... I have given of the passage.

... understood. Many similar instances are to be

... in which the pronoun refers to a substantive

... passage." The verb here is in Hithpahel, and is

... But this form of the

... Jer. v. 2.

... that is, an infant who shall not

... the Sept. appear to render the passage, connecting יָמוּת with

... נַעַר, ἀπολεῖται ὁ ἀποθνήσκων ἑκατὸν ἐτῶν, ὁ δὲ ἀπιθήσας ἀναξ-

... ἑκατὸν ἐτῶν, καὶ ἐπικατάρατος ἔσται.

SECT. 61. CHAP. LXVI.

THE subject matter of this chapter is very like that of the preceding, of which it forms a continuation. Like that, it is both denunciatory and consolatory. It contains;—1st. An address of Jehovah to the formal and unsanctified worshippers in the Temple, declaring the unprofitableness of their services unless accompanied with suitable dispositions and practices, and denouncing judgments upon hypocrites; verses 1—4;—2ndly. A consolatory promise to the persecuted believers in Christ, verse 5.—3rdly. An intimation of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, verse 6;—4thly. A prediction of the sudden and great increase of the Church consequent upon that event, verses 7—14;—5thly. A prophecy respecting the conversion of distant nations, by the instrumentality of the apostles, and other preachers of the Gospel from among the Jews, verses 18—23;—Lastly, a fearful representation of the awful judgments which await all rebels and apostates, verse 24.

1. Thus saith Jehovah,
   The heavens are my throne, and the earth is my
   footstool: —
   Where is this house that ye build unto me?
   And where is this place of my rest?
2. Yea, all these hath my hand made,
   And all these are mine, [1] saith Jehovah.
   But to this man will I look, to him that is
   humble,
   And of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at
   my word.
3. He that slayeth an ox, killeth a man; (2)
   He that sacrificeth a lamb, cutteth off a dog's
   neck;
   He that offereth an oblation, offereth swine's
   blood;
   He that burneth incense, blesseth an idol:
   Yea, they have chosen their own ways,
   And their soul delighteth in their abominations;
4. I also will choose punishments (3) for them,
   And will bring their terrors upon them;
   Because I called, and no one answered;
   I spake, and they hearkened not;
   But did that which was evil in mine eyes,

And chose that in which I took no pleasure.

5. Hear the word of Jehovah, ye that fear his word;
Your brethren that hate you, and cast you out because of my name,
Have said, "Let Jehovah be glorified, that we may behold." (4)
And he *shall* appear to your joy, and they shall be confounded.

6. A tumultuous cry from the city, a cry from the temple;
A cry of Jehovah rendering recompense to his enemies.

7. Before she was in travail, she brought forth;
Before her pangs came upon her, she was delivered of a male child.

8. Who hath heard aught like this? Who hath seen such things?
Doth a land bring forth (5) a people in a day?
Is a nation born all at once?
For Zion travailed of her children, and brought them forth, together.

9. Shall I open the womb, and shall I not bring forth? saith Jehovah.
And I who cause to bring forth, shall I shut up? saith thy God.

10. Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad in her, all ye that love her;
Rejoice greatly with her, all ye that mourn over her:—

11. That ye may suck, and be satisfied, from the breasts of her consolations;
That ye may press out, and regale yourselves with the richness (6) of her glory.
12. For thus saith Jehovah,
Behold I will extend peace to her like a river,
And the glory of the Gentiles like an overflowing stream.
And ye shall suck; and be carried at the side, and be dandled upon the knees.
13. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you;
Yea, in Jerusalem shall ye be comforted.
14. And ye shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice;
And your bones shall flourish like the green herb:—
And the hand of Jehovah shall be known to his servants,
And his wrath to his enemies.
15. For behold Jehovah will come in fire, and with chariots as a whirlwind;
To execute his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.
16. For with fire and with his sword, will Jehovah judge all flesh:
And the slain of Jehovah shall be many.
17. They who sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens,
One by one, (7) in the midst thereof;
Who eat the flesh of swine, and an abomination, (8) and the mouse;

They shall be consumed together, saith Jehovah:
18. For I know ([9]) their deeds and their thoughts.
It shall be, ([10]) that I will gather all nations and tongues;
And they shall come and see my glory.
19. And I will put a sign upon them, and I will send the escaped of them,
To the Gentiles, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow;
To Tubal, and Javan, the far distant coasts;
That have not heard my fame, nor seen my glory:
And they shall make known my glory among the Gentiles.
20. And they shall bring ([11]) your brethren from all the Gentiles, an offering to Jehovah,
Upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, ([12]) and upon mules, and upon dromedaries,
To my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Jehovah;
As the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel to the house of Jehovah.
21. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith Jehovah.
22. For as the new heavens and the new earth which I make,
Stand ([13]) before me, saith Jehovah;
So also doth your seed and your name stand before me.
23. And it shall be that from new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath;

All flesh shall come to worship before me, saith
Jehovah.

24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the
carcases of the men who rebelled against me;
For their worm shall not die, nor shall their fire
be quenched;
And they shall be a spectacle (of) to all flesh.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAP. LXVI. 1, 2.

V. 1, 2. The Jews were at all times excessively proud of their temple, and seem to have considered it a sort of safeguard to themselves and the city. Jeremiah sharply reproves them for their folly, and vain confidence, in this respect—(chap. vii. 4.) But although these words of Isaiah are thus applicable to the Jews in general, on account of their absurd and superstitious reliance upon the temple and its services, they are addressed, probably, more especially to the people who lived when our Lord appeared upon earth. Just before this period, Herod had greatly enlarged and adorned the temple, and had restored it, almost, to its ancient splendor. That the Jews held it in great reverence, and placed extraordinary confidence in its protection, is evident from several passages in the New Testament, and from the statements of Josephus. (Matt. xxiv. Acts xxi. 28. Wars of the Jews, B. vi. chap. 4.) To shew them the folly of such dependences, they are reminded that all things are Jehovah's, and belong to him by the right of creation; how then could they suppose that any building raised by the hands of men, could insure his presence, and save the wicked who frequented it from the punishment their sins had deserved? This seems to be the import of the appeal contained in these verses; the

propriety and beauty of which, must be apparent to every reader.

"*But to this man will I look,*" &c. As if Jehovah had said; "While I turn away mine eyes from your glorious and magnificent temple, because it is filled with the hypocritical and profane, I will regard with complacency and favor the humble and contrite sinner." Is not our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, founded upon this declaration? See chap. lvii. 15.

V. 3, 4. According to the authorized translation of this passage, the meaning is, that the Jews were so entirely destitute of real religion, and guilty of so many sins, that their very acts of worship were, in the sight of Jehovah, as so many crimes. But Bishop Lowth observes, I think justly, that "it is not easy to shew, how, in any circumstances, sacrifice and murder, the presenting of legal offerings and idolatrous worship, can possibly be of the same account in the sight of God." He therefore explains the 3rd verse thus;—

"These are instances of wickedness joined with hypocrisy; of the most flagitious crimes committed by those, who at the same time affected great strictness in the performance of all the external services of religion. God, by the prophet Ezekiel, upbraids the Jews with the same practices: "When they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into the sanctuary to profane it." Chap. xxiii. 30. See also Jer. vii. 9.

"*I also will choose punishments,*" &c. Or in other words, "As they have chosen to follow their own perverse inclinations rather than to obey my will, I also will act towards them as if they were not my people, and will punish them with peculiar severity.

I will *choose* punishments for them greater than those which I ordinarily inflict." So our Lord declared, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, "Then shall be great tribulation, *such as was not* since the beginning of the world." Matt. xxiv. 21. The history of that event, as has before been shewn, chap. v. 14, fully confirms the prediction.

V. 5. "*Hear the word of Jehovah,*" &c. This is evidently written for the consolation of the Apostles, and other pious Jews who acknowledged Jesus to be the true Messiah. These, as he had forewarned them to expect they would be, were hated by their Jewish brethren with the most bitter hatred; and were *cast out* of the synagogues simply because they professed themselves his disciples. John ix. 22. Their enemies mocked at their expectations, and derided the confidence which they had in their Saviour; and in the way of taunt and irony, they called upon him to *manifest his glory* in their destruction, if he were indeed Jehovah. See Matt. xxvii. 42.; James ii. 7. Under these reproaches the pious are consoled with the assurance that he would surely appear to their joy and salvation, and to the confusion of their enemies. This promise was accomplished, with reference to the believing Jews, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. But we are taught to look for its fulfilment in the second and more glorious advent of Christ "to recompense tribulation to the enemies of his people, and to give to them peace and rest." 2 Thess. i. 6. See chap. lxiii. 1—6.

V. 6. There is something peculiarly sublime and awful in the language and import of this verse. The impious Jews were warned in the preceding of their approaching destruction; and no sooner is the warning given, than the *shout* of Jehovah, as of a warrior rush-

ing into the battle, and the terrified *cries* of his vanquished foes, are heard from the city and the temple. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, is doubtless the event referred to.

V. 7, 8. "*Before she was in travail,*" &c. This shews beyond all dispute, that the first destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Babylonians, cannot be intended in the preceding part of the chapter; no events in the least degree answering to what is here predicted having then taken place. The great and sudden increase of the Church in consequence of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon Jews and Gentiles after the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, is the subject of these verses. It is impossible to calculate with accuracy the number of true converts that were then made. We know that in one day "three thousand were added to the Church." And a few years afterwards St. Peter speaks of *many myriads* (ten thousands) who believed amongst the Jews; while the number of the Gentile converts was still greater. Acts ii. 41. xxi. 20. Now when it is considered that from the time of Moses to Christ, a space of fifteen hundred years elapsed, during which period but few proselytes were made to the true religion; may not the duration of the apostolic ministry be called, in comparison, a *day;* and the multitude of members added to the Church, *a nation?* It may perhaps be objected against this application of the prophecy, that the expressions, "*Before she was in travail she brought forth,*" &c. imply that the Church would receive the predicted increase in the number of her children without pain and suffering; whereas, during the first two or three centuries after the promulgation of the gospel, the apostles and their successors, and all who were con-

verted by their means, that is, the whole Church, were called upon to endure reproaches and persecutions, and trials of every description. But, in reply to this objection, I would observe, that the chief thing promised the Church here is, a sudden and unexpected increase, as if a woman should be delivered of children the instant she was seized with the pains of labour; this, however, by no means implies the absence of all suffering; on the contrary, the very metaphor employed is necessarily connected in the mind with pain and sorrow. That the prediction may yet have a more remarkable fulfilment in the conversion of Jews and Gentiles in "the latter day," is not improbable; yet it appears to me that the effects which resulted from the preaching of the apostles, satisfy the terms of the prophecy.

"*A male child.*" This refers to the character of the members of the Church, and implies, that they would be *strong* in the faith, *active, zealous, courageous,* these being the distinguishing qualities of the male sex. The masculine gender in all languages, but especially in the Hebrew, denotes strength and excellency.

V. 9. "*Shall I open the womb,*" &c. That is, in other words, "Shall I begin a work and not perfect it? Shall I lay the foundation of my Church and not build upon it?" The interrogation, is a strong negative. Jehovah thus intimates that the predicted accession to the numbers and strength of the Church, although sudden, would nevertheless be lasting and increasing, and not of a mere temporary duration. And has it not proved so? Did the growth of the Church cease with the apostles? Did God, after he had thus, as it were, brought the Church into existence, stop its further increase? Every one knows to the contrary.

V. 10, 11. "*Rejoice with Jerusalem,*" &c. The figure employed in the preceding verse is still preserved. Those who loved the Church, and desired her prosperity, and who mourned because they had seen her afflicted and desolate, are now called upon to rejoice with her in her numerous spiritual offspring, and to partake with them of her consolations and privileges.

"*The breasts of her consolations,*" &c. Meaning the peculiar privileges of the Christian Church,—the ordinances of the Gospel, and the promises and benefits attached to them. Thus St. Peter, "as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter ii. 2. The frequent occurrence of this, and similar metaphors, both in the Old and New Testament, shews that religion is not, as some imagine, a mere cold, formal, assent of the understanding to the truth of revelation; but an *experimental* knowledge,—a knowledge in which the *feelings* are interested, of the excellency and value of those blessings which are conferred upon the true believer. And hence the danger and unprofitableness of the mere critical study of the Bible. If we would grow in grace and spiritual knowledge, we must sit down to read the scriptures with a soul "*hungering* and *thirsting* after righteousness;" with a heart "panting for the knowledge of God;" and not with a mind intent only upon curious questions, and verbal criticisms.

V. 12. "*I will extend peace to her,*" &c. See chap. xlviii. 18.

"*And the glory of the Gentiles,*" &c. That is, I will enrich and adorn her with great multitudes of Gentile converts who shall flow into her in abundance, like a full stream. Compare chap. xlix. 22; lx. 16, and notes.

V. 13. "*As one whom his mother comforteth,*" &c. This metaphor indicates the tenderness and care which Jehovah would exercise towards his Church. He would cherish it as a mother her infant child. St. Paul employs the same figure, 1 Thess. ii. 7. "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."

V. 14. "*And your bones shall flourish,*" &c. The reader will find this emblem explained, chap. lviii. 11.

"*And the hand of Jehovah shall be known,*" &c. i. e. his power shall be made manifest in the deliverance of his servants, and the destruction of their enemies. See verse 5.

V. 15, 16. The remarkable coincidence between the language of these verses and the predictions of our Lord concerning Jerusalem, as well as the narrative of Josephus, leave no doubt upon my mind, that the destruction of that city by the Romans is the event primarily referred to. Let the reader compare Matt. xxii. 1—7. The expressions in the seventh verse, especially deserve notice; "When the king heard thereof he was wrath; and he sent forth his *armies*, and destroyed those murderers, and *burned* up their city." Here destruction by fire and the sword, is clearly foretold, in accordance with the words of the prophet. Nor ought we to forget the manner in which the prediction was accomplished. It was not the wish or intention of the Roman commander to burn the temple. On the contrary he earnestly desired that it might be preserved. But God had decreed its destruction, and that by fire. In spite, therefore, of all the exertions of Titus, this holy and magnificent building was reduced to ashes, and thousands of those who defended it, were buried under its ruins. The narrative of this event, as given by Josephus, is one of the most affecting in

history. It is too long for insertion here, but ought to be read by every one who feels an interest in the dispensations of God towards his people. See Wars of the Jews, B. vi. chap. iv. § 5.

V. 17. "*They who sanctify themselves,*" &c. That is, who purify themselves by washings and lustrations, preparatory to offering sacrifices to their idol gods. Compare chap. i. 29, and lxv. 3, 4.

"*One by one.*" One after the other, *secretly* practising abominable rites. See Critical Note.

V. 18, 19. The general import of the prediction contained in these two verses, is this. Jehovah declares that, after the destruction of the reprobate Jews, he would send the small pious remnant which should escape that destruction, to the most distant Gentile nations, in order that they might make known to them his character and worship; that is, impart to them the knowledge of the true religion. This interpretation is obvious and natural, and, as every one knows, has been confirmed by the event. I shall not therefore perplex the reader's mind with the many other different explanations that have been given of the passage. He will find them stated at large, and refuted, by Vitringa. Two remarks of this learned commentator deserve particular notice. They are, 1st, That the assembling and calling spoken of, was to be made by Jews. 2ndly, That it was to be a calling of Gentiles who had not as yet *known the glory of Jehovah*, nor *heard his fame*. And hence he justly argues that the event predicted cannot be any future calling of the Gentiles, because those nations who are expressly mentioned by name, have long since heard of and known the God of Israel.

"*It shall be, that I will gather all nations,*" &c. It may be proper again to remind my readers, that, as

the prophet in speaking of the causes which would bring destruction upon the impious Jews in after times, mentions those sins of which the people were guilty in his own days; so, in predicting the conversion of the Gentiles, he speaks of that event in language adapted to the manner in which Jehovah was then worshipped. Supposing all nations to have been converted to the Jewish religion, it is evident that they must all have assembled together to worship God in his temple at Jerusalem. Hence it is said, "I will gather all nations, and they shall come," &c. Although the meaning is not, that they should actually go up to Jerusalem, but that they should worship the true God in sincerity, in the way of his appointing. The declaration of Christ to the woman of Samaria, seems to be conclusive against a literal gathering and going up of the nations; "Woman, said he, to her, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, *nor yet at Jerusalem*, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers, shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." John iv. 21. Compare chap. ii. 3.

V. 19. "*And I will put a sign upon them;*" viz. upon the escaped remnant of the Jews, not upon the Gentiles. But what was this sign? Doubtless, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, by which the apostles, and first preachers of the Gospel, were enabled to speak languages they had never learned, to work miracles, and to lay the foundation of the Christian dispensation, without the possibility of error. This, I say, was the sign here promised. And an evident sign it was, that they came with a commission from God, to instruct the nations in a new religion, and to shew them the way of life. Compare Acts viii. 17; x. 44. 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

"*To Tarshish, Pul,*" &c. The learned are not agreed as to what particular nations are here intended. We know, however, that *Tubal* and *Javan* were the sons of Japheth, and that *Tarshish* was one of the sons of Javan; and that by these the countries of Europe were peopled. Gen. x. 2, 4. Also, that Lud was the son of Mizraim, the son of Ham, from whom the Egyptians, and the other nations of Africa, were descended, verse 6—13. And need the reader be told, that the Gospel was chiefly preached in these countries in the apostolic age? Latterly, indeed, in Africa, Christianity has been almost extinct. But we must not forget that Carthage once produced a Cyprian and an Augustin; and Alexandria, an Origen, together with a multitude of other faithful witnesses of Christ.

"*Pul*" does not occur anywhere else in the Bible as the name of a people; but we read of Pul king of Assyria, 2 Kings xv. 19.

"*That draw the bow.*" Jeremiah, speaking of the nations of Africa, characterizes the Lydians as those that "handle and bend the bow." The same people, no doubt, are meant in this place.

V. 20. "*And they shall bring,*" &c. Who shall bring? Clearly, the escaped remnant before mentioned, who were to be dispersed among the Gentiles to make known to them the glory of Jehovah. These then would bring their Gentile *brethren* into the Church of Christ, "in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus." Accordingly we find that the believing Jews soon learned to give this title to those Gentiles who were brought into the Church. Thus in that celebrated decree which was made by the Council assembled at Jerusalem respecting the observance of the ceremonial law, they write in this manner, "The apostles, and elders, and

brethren, send greeting unto the *brethren* which are of the Gentiles," &c. Acts xv. 23.

"*An offering to Jehovah.*" St. Paul makes use of this identical expression with reference to the Gentile converts made by him, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that *the offering up* of the Gentiles might be acceptable." Rom. xv. 16.

"*Upon horses, and in chariots,*" &c. It is scarcely necessary to observe that this language must not be literally interpreted. If, as seems to me most manifest, Jerusalem signifies the Church; all that is implied in this promise is, that the preachers of the Gospel would be furnished with every qualification requisite for making converts, and for presenting them to God and his Church, as the holy and acceptable fruit of their labour.

The above view of these two verses will, probably, to some of my readers appear forced and unnatural. And I grant indeed that we might be led to suppose upon the first perusal of them, that they relate to the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land in the latter days. But an attentive consideration of the general scope of the whole prophecy must, I think, convince every one that this opinion is erroneous. Throughout this chapter the three great subjects treated of are,—the destruction of the impious Jews; the preservation of a chosen remnant; and the conversion of the Gentiles. These form the subject-matter of the prophecy, and are taken up in regular succession. That the nineteenth verse relates to the last of these events, has, I trust, been satisfactorily shewn. But if so, is it not most improbable that this verse should have reference to another of an entirely different character, and far removed from the former in point of time?

[illegible] contend for the literal [illegible] restoration of the [illegible] purpose do they suppose [illegible]? Not certainly to offer [illegible] the Mosaic ritual: for they [illegible] Christ hath by one offering [illegible] them that are sanctified." [illegible] the necessity of sacrifices [illegible] the temple, in which [illegible] be required. And, [illegible] a distinct people, because [illegible] between Jew and [illegible]. It must be admitted, [illegible] I am aware, however, [illegible] may be urged on the [illegible] As has been before re- [illegible] are right. In the [illegible] and, since [illegible] of God's ancient [illegible] we do not exactly [illegible] that salvation will be

[illegible] priests," &c. That is, [illegible] of religion: for although [illegible] called priests under the legal [illegible] of course to be under- [illegible] other terms of the pro- [illegible] another proof that the [illegible] preceding verse. For the [illegible] system of to be "priests and [illegible] as a thing; but it would [illegible] the Jews intended. Compare

[illegible] &c.—*stand before* [illegible] and all his works from the

beginning of the world." He sees in his infinite mind, all future things; and has, as it were, a perfect pattern, or picture, before him, of whatever it is his purpose hereafter to accomplish. "The new heavens and the new earth stand before him." Although not yet created, he sees them, if I may so speak, in his mind's eye; and their existence is equally certain with him, as is the past existence of those things which have been already. And so it is with regard to his people, who are here called the *seed* of the apostles and first evangelists, that is, their spiritual offspring. These are, and were ever, before Jehovah. He sees the whole company of believers who shall compose the glorified Church; and when their number is complete, he will gather them altogether in one in Christ. (Ephes. i. 10.) Such seems to be the import of this verse, which, however, is usually explained in a different manner. See Critical Note. Also, chap. xlix. 16.

V. 23. The *new moons and the Sabbaths* were the periods dedicated in an especial manner to the worship of God, under the law. Hence the prophet, who, as we have seen, throughout employs language adapted to the legal dispensation in predicting the general prevalence of true religion, makes use of these terms. And is not the wisdom and propriety of this method manifest? If I wished to convey to the mind of a child the idea of something he had never seen or experienced, I should not describe it in such language as is ordinarily employed by grown up persons, but I should use those terms with which he was acquainted, and with the sound of which he was familiar. So the Holy Spirit foretels the extension of the knowledge and worship of Jehovah among all nations, in terms adapted to the capacities and experience of those for

whose instruction and encouragement the prophecies were primarily intended.

V. 24. "*And they shall go forth,*" &c. Can this mean, that, either the inhabitants of Jerusalem, supposing it to be again re-built and re-peopled, or, the glorified saints, shall go forth from their happy abodes to look upon the carcases of the rebellious Jews burning in the valley of Hinnon? Surely such a supposition is monstrous, and abhorrent to every Christian feeling. But what then is the meaning of this verse? It has, I trust, been proved, that the preceding predictions concerning the *going up of all nations to worship at Jerusalem,* are to be understood metaphorically, or mystically. And if so, the passage under consideration must be interpreted in like manner. If the *going up of all nations,* signifies an act of the mind, not of the body; their *going forth* must also, by analogy, signify a *mental,* and not a *bodily* act. Now in order to look at any object with the eye of the body, we must approach within sight of that object; and therefore the prophet, although he refers to an act of the mind, yet, since he employs figurative language, describes that act as if it were to be performed by the body. Hence then the import of this, undoubtedly, obscure verse, appears to be, that the Church, composed of Gentiles brought to a knowledge of the truth by the instrumentality of the pious Jewish remnant, should behold, in the terrible judgments inflicted upon the reprobate part of the nation by God, (who would be figuratively slain by him, (see chap. lxv. 15,) and being cast out from his presence like a fœtid *carcase,* be continually harassed with horrors and fears) an awful type of those eternal punishments which await transgressors in the world to come. And have not the Jews in truth been a sad and instructive *spectacle* to the Christian

Church, ever since the destruction of their city, and their dispersion among the Gentiles? Have they not been regarded in all ages as a fearful example of the danger of rebellion and apostacy? Not that this application comprehends the whole meaning of the verse. Our Lord's use of the emblems of "*the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never shall be quenched,*" teaches us to regard the words of the prophet also as descriptive of that eternal punishment which awaits the wicked, and of the infliction of which the righteous will be the secure spectators. (Psalm lviii. 10.)

REMARKS.

The book of Isaiah concludes with the two great topics of Revelation, namely; the goodness of God to those who fear him, and the terrible consequences of his wrath upon the disobedient and wicked. In the preceding chapter these are exhibited in the most sublime and impressive language. Here then we may contemplate "the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but towards us, goodness; if we *continue* in his goodness; otherwise we also shall be cut off." (Rom. xi. 22.) And can we read these things and not be brought to serious reflection and earnest prayer? Have not all the threatenings which Jehovah pronounced against his ancient people come to pass? Has he not made them a scorn, and derision, and a curse among all the nations whither he has driven them? But "if God spared not the natural branches," ought we not to "take heed lest he spare not us?" "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And does not the New Testament contain threatenings addressed to the nominal Christian

…denounced against
…he say to them on his
…me, ye cursed, into everlast-
…his angels."
…to see the guests, he saw
…a wedding garment.
…Friend, how camest thou in
…garment? And he was
…to the servants, bind
…away, and cast him
…weeping and gnash-
…but few are chosen."
…These are awful passages.
…sentences contained in
…Questions upon
…called him "Lord."
…well into the nature
…souls? The con-
…approaching. Without
…the secrets of God, or to know
…the most sober student
…must admit we have every reason to con-
…clude the winding up of the present dispensation,
…and complete establishment of the "king-
…dom of God," is not many ages distant; and who can
…conceive the unutterably awful solemnities
…must necessarily take place? Before that period
…eternal destiny of us all will be irreversibly fixed.
…we must all appear before the judgment seat
…of Christ, that every one may receive the things done
…in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it
…be good or bad." Here the …est pre…
…the snares and allu… sin…
…of a corrupt and de… F…
…promises and threa… e w…

is the only principle which can enable us from our hearts to hate and renounce the dazzling prizes of ambition, the soul-deadening gratifications of voluptuousness, and the more sober and specious, but no less dangerous rewards of penuriousness and avarice.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Will the man who believes that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God;" that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" and that no covetous person, no adulterer, no drunkard, no sensualist, in short, of any description, but those only who live a life of self-denial, purity, and benevolence, can enter the kingdom of God; will such a man need to be told that he ought not to allow his heart and mind to be occupied with the dissipating frivolities of fashionable life, or with the honours which come from men? Will he require to be continually reminded that he is not to live to and for himself alone, but that he is sent hither to promote, as far as in him lies, the glory of his Creator and Redeemer, and the general good of his fellow creatures? Will he not rather, influenced by faith in "things not seen as yet," like Moses, "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt?" Will he not, like St. Paul, "count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; and esteem them as refuse, that he may win Christ, and be found in him?" Will he not, in short, cheerfully, and of his own accord, resign the fallacious pleasures of sin, and seek with his whole soul that "glory, and honour, and immortality," which he knows are prepared for all the faithful servants of God? But are these the feelings, is such the conduct, of the majority of those who compose what may be called, the *professedly* religious world, in our days? It is

easy to find fault, and to point out the inconsistencies and sins of others, while we forget our own; I will not therefore enlarge upon this subject. Let us all look into our own hearts; remembering that "we must every one of us give account of *himself* to God."

There is one other point it may be proper to notice. Much has been said and written of late concerning the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the second coming of Christ, and his personal reign upon earth during the Millennium. These are undoubtedly interesting subjects, and ought, the two last especially, to occupy much of our thoughts. But, I confess, the spirit in which they have been brought forward by most modern writers, and the coldness and disunion which they seem to occasion between sincere Christians, where a difference of opinion prevails respecting them, has made me shrink from introducing them in the way of controversy. It has been my object simply to give, what appeared to me, the true sense, and natural application of the several prophecies contained in this sublime and instructive portion of the word of God. Many passages from Isaiah are brought forward by the writers above referred to, in confirmation of their views, but most of them, as far as I can judge, without sufficient regard to the context. However, this is a matter of opinion. A more serious objection to their books is, that they appear to have a natural tendency to turn away the mind from what is solid, and essential in religion, to what is non-essential and speculative. This effect is owing chiefly, perhaps, to the importance they attach to dates and periods; in examining and discussing of which, they *seem* to forget the weightier matters of the Gospel. "It is not for us to know the times and the seasons." This error began to work even in the time of the apostles,

and St. Paul found it necessary to warn the Thessalonians against it. (2 Thess. ii.) Let us not then attempt to be wise above what is written, but whilst we look forward with longing expectation to the "glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," let us live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," in the faithful and unostentatious discharge of those duties which we owe to our God, our neighbours, and ourselves; remembering that this is not intended to be a state of enjoyment, but of *preparation*. This life is a life of conflict, obedience, and suffering; but, "there remaineth a *rest* for the *people of God*." A *rest*; how consolatory and encouraging the thought! Wretched, surely, must those be who have no hope of obtaining this rest. Yet the greater part of mankind immersed in the cares of business, or absorbed in the pursuit of momentary pleasure, never think of it. Created to be eternally happy, or miserable; with *the worm that* NEVER *dieth, and the fire that* NEVER *shall be quenched*, on the one hand, and the *fulness of joy which is in the presence of God*, accompanied with "*glory, and honour, and immortality*," on the other; they neither dread the first, nor seek the last; but centre all their hopes and desires in those few years which make the sum of human life. O "blindness to the future!" Shall we say, "kindly given?" Shall we not rather say; "inflicted as a righteous judgment upon them, because they love darkness rather than light?" But, my reader, let us turn away our eyes from the folly and wickedness of those around us, and consider ourselves. What are *we* doing? Are we seeking that rest which remains for the people of God? Are we "walking by faith and not by sight?" Are we in the constant habit of carrying our thoughts forward, and of looking,

" not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ? "

May we have grace so to do. And may we be strengthened to persevere to the end. And then, although we know not each other in this life, we shall yet meet around the throne of God, and in the presence of our Redeemer, be made joint partakers of the pure joys of a brighter and a better world.

CRITICAL NOTES.

CHAP. LXVI.

(1) "*All these things are mine.*" "A word, absolutely necessary to the sense, is here lost out of the text: לי, mine; it is preserved by the Septuagint and Syriac." Bishop Lowth.

(2) "*He that slayeth an ox,*" &c. This is the literal and natural rendering of the original, and not, as in the authorized version, "He that killeth an ox *is as if* he slew a man," &c.

(3) "*Punishments.*" Vitringa, "*quæ ægre ipsis erunt.*" Bishop Lowth, "*calamities.*" תעלוליהם is derived from the Pihel form of the root, which signifies, to *hurt*, to *punish*. Lament. i. 22.

(4) "*Have said,*" &c. The text in this place, as we now have it, is obscure. I am inclined to think, that ונראת ought to be repeated, and be rendered as the first person in Kal, plural, in the first instance, and as the third person singular in Niphal, in the second. Compare chap. v. 19. Bishop Lowth, however, gives a different turn to the whole passage;

> 'Say ye to your brethren that hate you;
> And that thrust you out, for my name's sake;
> Jehovah will be glorified, and he will appear,' &c.

(5) "*Doth a land bring forth.*" Literally, "*Doth a land travail of a people,*" &c.

(6) זיז is a word of doubtful meaning. It is rendered by the Septuagint by δοξα.

(7) "*One by one.*" This is one of those passages, the precise meaning of which it is perhaps impossible to ascertain. In such cases it seems worse than useless to spend much time in the critical examination of the several renderings proposed by different translators. The most ancient version, that of the Septuagint, affords no help. Both Vitringa and Bishop Lowth take אחד to be the name of a god called Adad, whom the Syrians worshipped; but a strong argument against this supposition is, that the word is not so understood in any of the old versions, nor does the name of this deity occur elsewhere in the Bible. Bishop Lowth tells us that the Chaldee and Syriac, and after them

Symmachus and Theodotion, take the word אחד in its common meaning, rendering the sentence, "*one after another.*" They appear to have read אחד אחד.

(9) שקץ was, probably, the name of some unclean animal, but we know not what.

(9) "*I know.*" ידעתי This word, although not in the text, is evidently necessary to complete the sense.

(10) "*It shall be.*" Here also the text seems to be imperfect; עת or something similar must be supplied.

(11) The first כל is omitted by the Septuagint, and in one MS.

(12) "*Litters.*" Or a sort of panniers, according to Bishop Lowth, with a covering, slung across a camel's back, one on each side.

(13) "*Stand before me,*" &c. This is the usual and natural meaning of the word עמדיכם, as the reader will find by referring to the lexicons. It signifies to stand up, or before another.

(14) "*A spectacle.*" So Septuagint, ὁρασιν; they probably read לראון The usual reading and rendering is, however, in some measure justified by Dan. xii. 2, yet the translation of the Septuagint seems to me preferable.

And now, having brought this work to a conclusion, I would desire to record my grateful sense of the goodness of God, in having granted me life and leisure to complete it. May he graciously pardon whatever is wrong or defective in it, and give his blessing with whatever good it may contain, for Jesus Christ's sake. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

THE END.

INDEX OF TEXTS.

VOL. II.

GENESIS.

CHAP.	PAGE
III. 14	424
VI. 3	393
XLVIII. 15, 16	392

EXODUS.

III. 2—4	392
III. 7	392
XXV. 22	14
XXXIII. 14	392
XXXVII. 7	14

LEVITICUS.

XXV. 8	356

DEUTERONOMY.

XXXII. 13	307
XXXII. 15	111

1 KINGS.

VI. 23	14

2 KINGS.

XIX. 35	17

NEHEMIAH.

V. 19	27

PSALMS.

II. 8	358
XVIII. 33	307
XLV. 2—5	176
LVIII. 10	453
LXXX. 1	14
LXXXVII. 4	205
LXXXIX. 10	205
CIII. 5	56

PROVERBS.

XXI. 18	97

JEREMIAH.

II. 25	297

EZEKIEL.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. 10	14

DANIEL.

I. 3	39
V. 5	116

HOSEA.

II. 21—23	131
XI. 1	55

MICAH.

VI. 6, 7	59

ZECHARIAH.

I. 14	151
VI. 13	264

MALACHI.

III. 1	392
IV. 4	278

MATTHEW.

II. 15	55
III. 17	80
V. 15	227
VI. 16	308
IX. 2—7	31
XII. 17	79, 81
XV. 19	293
XX. 28	233
XXII. 11	326, 360
XXV. 31—46	311
XXVII. 12—14	231

MARK.

I. 4	48

LUKE.

IV. 16—21	355
XI. 21	184

JOHN.

I. 5	337

CHAP.	PAGE
III. 29	251
VI. 38	80
VI. 45	253
VI. 53	265
VII. 16	193
VII. 17	87
VIII. 34	355
IX. 22	441
IX. 59	85
X. 18	233
XIV. 23	397
XV. 1—6	415
XVII. 5, 6	263

ACTS.

III. 21	428
X. 4	270
XIII. 34	272
XIV. 13	133
XX. 7	312
XX. 35	235

ROMANS.

I. 4	194
I. 20	54
II. 28	419
III. 25	233
III. 27	81
IV. 11	202
V. 12—19	362
VII. 4.	251
VIII. 33	255
IX. 31	81
X. 15	226
X. 16	229
X. 20	410
XI. 26	327
XIII. 14	326
XV. 7	136
XV. 21	229

1 CORINTHIANS.

I. 30	362
II. 9	396
VII. 5	310
XIV. 22	447
XV. 41	428
XV. 51	427
XVI. 2	312

2 CORINTHIANS.

CHAP.	PAGE
II. 7	293
III. 2	359
III. 9	344
III. 18	338
IV. 6	338
V. 4	30

GALATIANS.

I. 4	223
III. 28	273

EPHESIANS.

I. 10	451
II. 20	253
V. 22—33	251

PHILIPPIANS.

II. 5	79
II. 9	135
II. 12	19
III. 8	235

COLOSSIANS.

II. 15	235
III. 11	177

1 THESSALONIANS.

IV. 17	423

2 TIMOTHY.

I. 19	263

HEBREWS.

IX. 16, 17	82
XII. 2	234

JAMES.

II. 23	67

1 PETER.

II. 2.	444
II. 5.	450
II. 24.	229

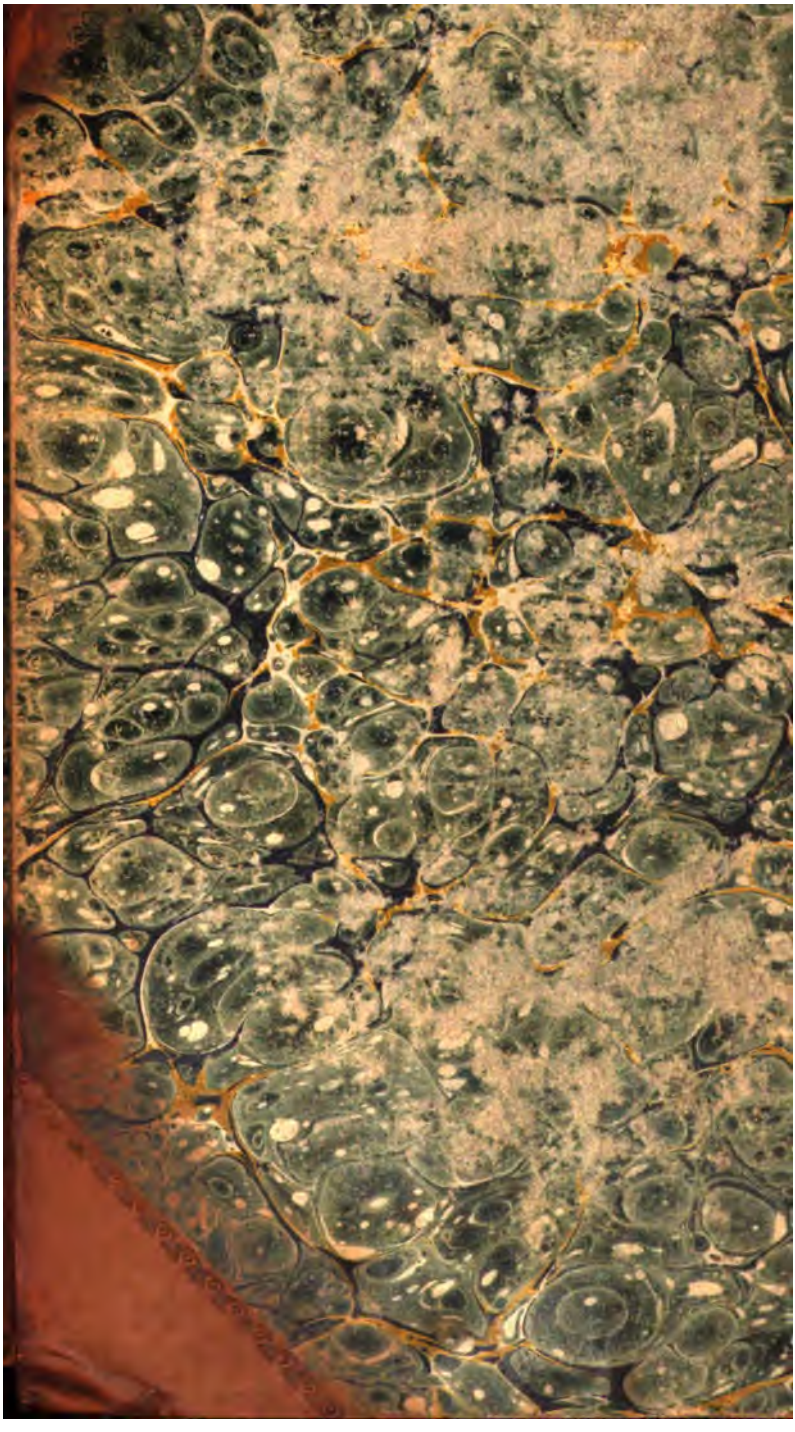
2 PETER.

I. 10	72
III. 13	426

INDEX OF HEBREW WORDS IN ROMAN CHARACTERS.

VOL. II.

	PAGE
Aarik	169
Adaddeh	34
Ammoth	89
Bamoth	242
Bangnal mishpat	197
Bangnal pepiyoth	73
Berith	89
Cahah	89
Ceen	207
Cerang	155
Chalits	313
Chalki	297
Chamuts	385
Chasidi	272
Chazah	241
Chesed	296
Chiphazon	240
Choli	242
Dor	242
Ephgneh	89
Gabah	240
Gnamusoth	155
Gnedhem	119
Gniddim	493
Gur	256
Hatsliach	273
Jagiang	139
Jashchil	240
Jishtomem	330
Karas	155
Katon	350
Kavah	403
Kedoach	403
Kobang	219
Lamed (ל)	155
Mallet	156
Magnaloth	34
Magnatsad	119
Massim	193
Mengnoth	169
Merudim	313
Meshullam	89
Mishpat	89
Mistolel	330
Misuccan	57
Nasa	240
Netsurim	432
Nesuoth	155
Netscham	385
Nosesah	331
Pishtah	104
Phuk	256

	PAGE
Raon	459
Rinnah	104
Ruach Jehovah	331
Rum	240
Shakal	186
Shamemu	240
Shekets	459
Shetseph	256
Shiphgnath	350
Sum	364
Tach	119
Tangnaluli	459
Tatsmiach	138
Tho	218
Tsamath	156
Tsangnir	350
Tsiphgnoni	330
Tsongneh	207
Vau (ו)	241
Zikoth	197
Ziz	459

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